

The International
Crosby Circle Presents

MARCH
1984

BING



Edited by REG BRISTO

NO. 71

"ONLY PLAY IT ONCE - THE SECOND TIME
HE STARTS IMPROVISING!"

John Scott Trotter
advising a fellow
musical-director
concerning Bing.
Vide. DR. MIZE.

The article, A CROONER GROWS UP, is, of course, a
vintage 1938 reproduction from a film magazine.
These seem to be much appreciated by young as well
as older members.

(Facing page 24)

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BING



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<u>PRINCIPAL CONTENTS:</u>	<u>Page</u>		<u>Page</u>
Editorial.. ..	4	Christmas Card.. ..	21
Social Events.. ..	5	Bing on the Box.. ..	23
Leslie Gaylor writes	7	A Crooner grows up!.. ..	25
The Americans: Alastair Cookell		Track Events.. ..	27
A vintage reproduction.. ..	14	Trading Post.. ..	33
Credits where due.. ..	15	Discrosby.. ..	35
A vintage reproduction.. ..	20	Members' letters.. ..	42
		Returns of GEC Radio!..	46

For its a long, long time, from December to - April, May? It is indeed a long haul unless you like gales, snow, rain, sleet, frozen roads (and pipes!) and hate the warmth of the sun on your back! No matter, we're well on the way now. I hope!

Members often comment on the present long-running Editorship, asking "Do you ever get jaded, fed-up, with the same letters, the same subjects...?" I suppose the quick answer is NO! And the letters are certainly not all the same. For instance, within three days, I had a letter from a 14-year-old, a 15-year-old and from a gentleman, well, he says he has been a Bing fan since 1928! The two youngsters are something to ponder on: they want to know all about Bing, his records, his films, his radio, his life... Just how do you start on satisfying such young people? Reading BING and joining the Circle is a good start - but only a start...what a task they have set themselves - and us! Jaded? Not on your life... Those new members? Master Dominic Millard, 10 Murford Walk, Hartcliffe, Bristol, Miss Melanie Prendiville, 14 Fords Park Rd., Canning Town, London, E16 - and the "old-timer" Reg Heath, 42 Larkhill, Wantage, Oxfordshire, OX12 8HA. We don't normally list new members (always thoroughly welcome!) but we thought this circumstance quite exceptional....

EDITORIAL

(4)

we have long been aware that a philosophic turn of mind is essential when occupying an editorial chair. Last Christmas seemed to ram home the point in no uncertain fashion. One considers carefully, for instance, just when to post the December issue? Too early - and we may miss something turning up. Too late and we'd never be forgiven if members didn't receive it by the holiday. And, without wishing to upset our members who work in the Post Office we have to confess that the mail isn't what it was once... true, experience has shown that some are delivered the very next day, even in Scotland, whereas others take 10 days or more to get to Bristol!

So, we must be early enough to avoid the monstrous pile-up of mail which, understandably, puts enormous strain on post office resources. We opted, therefore, for December 5th; this would give almost three weeks for all copies to be delivered! A slightly pessimistic approach no doubt, for which we were soon a little regretful!

For no sooner had we delivered the Christmas issue to the Post Office than WHAM! it all began to happen. Two 'new' albums in the shops, plus a 'new' single... five films scheduled for television showing (and a sixth to follow shortly afterwards).

The really surprising thing was that a week afterwards we were still getting letters from members glumly predicting that it was going to be a thin Christmas as far as Mr. C. was concerned! But it was small consolation that we weren't the only ones caught out by late developments! For in the event, and short of a topical TV Christmas show, it must have turned out the best Bing Christmas ever.

We go into the five plus one film aspect and the reason for putting 'new' albums in inverted commas in the course of this issue

And it was clearly a matter for rejoicing, as we have learned, for those video-recorder owners who were, in one fell swoop as it were, to add so considerably to their Crosby-film-collection. Which all goes to show you never really know what lies round the corner in the glorious pursuit of Crosbyana. Like walking round a junk-shop - and picking up a mint-copy of LE BING! Yes, someone did that recently, too.

So take heart - life need never be dull when you're a Crosby man - or lady!



SOCIAL EVENTS



OR, IN ONE CASE, A SHOCK NON-EVENT * * * *

In the previous issue of BING on page 32 JOHN MARSHALL announced his plans to follow-up his Waldorf event of May, 1983. Now alas, we have the following from John:

John Marshall regrets that the 1984 Bing Crosby Celebration scheduled for May 5th at the Washington Hotel, has had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. In doing this he would like to thank, personally, every single one of those who WERE coming along, often at some considerable sacrifice, and would assure them that closing down the idea was the only possible and final resort. Last minute cancellations, the coldest of shoulders from the immediate London area and the little matter of not being able to repeat last year's losses make BING 81 an impossible luxury. He would still like to try next year and anyone willing to risk having a day in which to meet kindred souls should understand that these past five months were not entirely wasted, thanks to dozens of you who do have the right stuff. All monies will by now have been fully refunded.

John Marshall's stories seldom need comment; in this case, however, his announcement comes as a surprise, indeed, as a chilling shock. We well realise the difficulty of being absolutely certain about attendance 5-6 months ahead and that in so many cases there were perfectly legitimate reasons for withdrawing. Even so, John's remark about the "coldest of shoulders from the immediate London area" strikes a discouraging note. We were certainly of the opinion that the interest, enthusiasm, and sheer goodwill exhibited over the Waldorf event in May 1983 would have ensured automatic and even greater success this year. It may be that many who intended going had unfortunately delayed their application to John. Now John tells us his decision is irrevocable - for this year, at any rate.

Any puzzled at BING 81 above: it would have been close to the 81st anniversary of Bing's birth.

THE LEEDS EVENT scheduled for October 7th next will almost certainly be brought forward to SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th. This, of course, is the long-running and now traditional dinner that Michael Crampton organises in the Yorkshire city. A part of American Crosby admirers are making an European tour in the autumn, or Fall, as they put it, and intended taking in the Leeds event. To meet their itinerary the date will, as stated, almost certainly be changed to September 30th. Those who normally attend, or intend doing so for the first time, will make the necessary arrangements to their plans. The visit of our Transatlantic friends will make Leeds an even bigger and more interesting affair this year; and it will, obviously, afford an excellent opportunity for those with US pen-friends &c. to make personal acquaintance. Full details will be in the next issue of BING - the June issue.

On the previous page, line 3 of THE LEEDS EVENT, last 3 words should read "a party of American Crosby Admirers.."

Anyone wishing to get in touch with Michael Crampton re. the event, or the change of date &c., he is at 19, Carrholm Crescent, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, West Yorks, LS7 2NL, Tel: 0532-689556.

AND UP NORTH ! The social round continues. PHIL MORGAN,
 has undertaken the task of keeping us fully
informed of events up in the North East and writes:

Our next event will again be at The Five Bridges Hotel in Gateshead on FRIDAY, 11th MAY in the Washington Suite. Proceedings will commence around 6pm and records, quizzes and films will be well to the fore as they have always proved so popular. A three-course meal will be provided and the all-in price for the evening is £5.00. Tickets may be obtained from

the main organiser : JOHN JOYCE,
 21 Birchfield Gardens,
 Gateshead,
 TYNE & WEAR (Tel: 0632-87861)

We are hoping to build on the success of our October last event, which as you read in BING last time, was highly successful. Attendance is by no means confined to those in the North East and anyone is most welcome. In this connection, anyone requiring overnight accommodation should contact John and the necessary arrangements will be made. The weather should be much more congenial by May 11th though a good evening is virtually guaranteed whatever the weather !

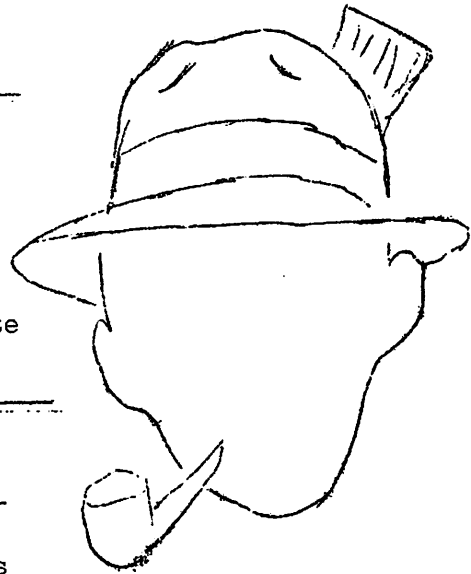
There appear to be no keener Crosby people than those in the North East for this is merely the next in what has now turned out to be a highly successful series of social events.

Space is willingly given to publicise any events designed to further the interest and enjoyment in Crosbyana; anyone with ideas or plans should not hesitate to get in touch with us to e. our support in letting members know what is going on, or what is planned.

As you would expect, we deal with the amazing spate of Bing films on TV in the feature, BING ON THE BOX. Too late to be included in that round-up, however, came the showing of that really splendid film THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S (1945) on BBC-1, Sunday 26th February. This was, of course, the even more successful follow-up to the popularity of GOING MY WAY and Bing's second appearance as Father O'Malley. For those who argue this was Bing's best film, we wouldn't dream of arguing! Splendid script, humour, pathos, philosophy - and Bing in splendid voice. The presence of the beautiful and talented Ingrid Bergman was a major asset; and revealed just how capable Bing was in working with the highest class of actress. Happily, the film was shown in its entirety; other TV showings have been cut to exclude the sequence showing the reunion of the girl's parents, and the song IN THE LAND OF BEGINNING AGAIN.

LESLIE GAYLOR

makes his usual - and welcome - contribution on his, and our, favourite subject !



As is the usual manner of mine, and tho' the 'new' year is now well advanced, I would like to thank the many members who sent me their greetings for Christmas and best wishes for 1984.

I noted with pleasure the extent to which some members went to make their greetings so individual. In particular I was delighted to receive a card from Nancy Briggs, formerly secretary to Basil Grillo, President of Crosby Enterprises. It was a card showing Nancy and her husband Stan on holiday somewhere in the Far East incorporating warmest greetings. Other members went to some lengths to produce their own picturesque, not to mention artistic, cards. Another that particularly interested me came from Gordon and Elizabeth Wesley of Ilford. Their card was issued by 'Athena International, London' and features a fairly life-like painting of Bing and other scenes to illustrate the printed words: 'Dreaming of a White Christmas'. No doubt other members saw this highly original card. In fact, there is reason to believe this card may reappear for Christmas, 1984.

Of recent times I have noticed the points of view expressed about the late John Scott Trotter's accompaniments and arrangements for Bing recordings. Indeed, the subject crops up a lot in my mail.

I'm afraid I cannot join in on what might be termed the 'crucifying' of John Scott and cannot agree with people who have become so wise after the event, as it were.

For the times they were written in, John Scott's arrangements fitted in extremely well and perhaps there is something in the reason why the partnership of Bing and JST through the media of records and radio was the most successful link-up of artist and musical-director ever.

And it should not be overlooked that many of America's most famous musicians were often present in the John Scott Trotter Orchestra at varying times although publicity was seldom given to this important facet. One can reasonably assume they were happy to be part of that orchestra.

Merely from a personal point of view I have had much pleasure from JST's work and I much admired his point of view that the singer should have the record, not the orchestra.

There is, of course, no datum line from which to work; it boils down

to purely personal opinions always but I would certainly like to cancel-out member Don Woods' view (in the last issue, page 49) that John's arrangement of THE MOON GOT IN MY EYES was "so stodgy and funereal". Really, I felt like tearing out of my head the hair that I have remaining when I read this comment of Don's.

For once in our hitherto unblemished columns space has to be found for a 'down-to-earth' imprecation, for I muttered to myself "Bloody Hell!"

Another matter has reared its head in our pages concerning Bing's signature tune of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT and I have been asked what I think of an alternate tune that could have been used for the purpose. Personally, I think the matter was originally brought up merely as something to write about or as a topic for discussion.

BLUE OF THE NIGHT is as firmly fixed with Bing as the Rock of Gibraltar is in the Mediterranean sea! I couldn't imagine any other song 'fitting the bill' now that it is firmly embedded in my mind; and John Scott Trotter's brilliant arrangement and accompaniment on the 1945 recording is, for me, just magical.

As a keen radio listener I have noted that the Bing-Rosemary Clooney album FANCY MEETING YOU HERE has been the most played on radio throughout the year from the Crosby repertoire. And incidentally, I have in my possession an interesting association with that particular album. Given to me by the man who was the "mixer" on the recording sessions, lasting three days, one 'Bones' Howe, are the actual recording work sheets taken down as the album progressed. It is interesting to study the data and comments jotted down though one needs a degree of technical knowledge I suppose - yet FALSE START is easily understood!

One often gets hold of a cherished Bing record in unusual circumstances. I always enjoy reading of these acquisitions, sharing almost the delight of the discoverer. In early February 1960, the Crosby office mailed me a letter saying that RCA were releasing two separate singles on February 9 of that year. They were scheduled as follows:

ITS A GOOD DAY
THE MUSIC OF HOME

ALOHA MEANS I LOVE YOU
THE NEW ASHMOLEAN MARCHING SOCIETY AND
STUDENTS' CONSERVATORY BAND.

Listed in the letter also were the master numbers and the recording date of January 23, 1960 for all four titles. A change of plan meant that one single came out on February 9 and this comprised the first two mentioned songs. Even at that, however, this 45rpm single wasn't released in all states in America.

The song, THE MUSIC OF HOME, was featured in a Broadway show called "Greenwillow" which had a run of five weeks only. This was the reason why RCA deleted the single from their lists in no time at all!

Not having any firm contacts in the USA at that time I wondered if I would ever be fortunate enough to get hold of a copy. Imagine my delight when some time later a package arrived from the Crosby office containing a copy which, despite having a black label, had

been autographed by Bing in grey crayon! My delight soon turned to horror and I became, momentarily, the unhappiest chap in Britain! The record was broken into three pieces, held together only by the label.... Nevertheless I wrote and thanked Bing and had to mention the sad outcome, even sadder when I learned they were unable to get another copy for me.

I wasn't entirely out of luck, however, as Patricia Sullivan, that great Crosby admirer in the States, did manage to send me a secondhand copy - which was a little on the worn side.

I thought around the matter and decided to go to the fountain head, as it were - the giant RCA company itself, and chose their New Jersey establishment. I explained the circumstances and my disappointment occasioned by the broken record and they, in typically generous American goodwill, airmailed me a copy as a gift. Seems the copy was the only one they had - their 'file' copy forsooth - but they said as I appeared to be a great admirer of Bing they just couldn't let me be without a copy. So this particular record is now in a frame and holds a prize place in my "Bing Room". I do, of course, have all four titles on another record for it was subsequently issued in Australia as an EP.

Mention of the ITV Wembley show of Bing in the article reproduced in the last issue reminded me that thro' the good offices of Frank Murphy I was able to go to London on November 12, 1961, to watch the recording of the show. As to be expected for such an occasion it was a really memorable evening and a great experience. Before the tele-recording started Bing came to meet us and shook each of us by the hand and - thanked us for coming! There were 20 of us in a Crosby party.

And afterwards we waited outside Bing's dressing-room; a man came out and took our tickets and later returned them to us autographed by Bing - and quite impressive tickets they were, too, each one being numbered. I have an LP of this show in good sound quality made from a tape the late Bob Roberts let me have, and as far as I know, there are only five of these albums in existence.

Happily, a couple of 'curios' have come my way since the last issue of BING. Firstly, old friend Jim Reilly of Hereford, sent me a cassette of German origin. It is entitled THE GREAT VOCALISTS, issued by Bella Musica (BM-C 62-320). There are 12 songs on the cassette shared equally by six singers and Bing opens up with two radio tracks, SORRY and LOVE SOMEBODY. The quality of these two tracks is easily the best I've heard of the two particular songs and are subjected to 'stereo' treatment. The other singers are Ella Fitzgerald, Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Nat King Cole.

Secondly, another good friend I have much to thank for, Mr. Justice Francis X. Smith, m d me a 45rpm record of Bing singing THE TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC. It appears this was issued in America recently in connection with a book of the same name. The label is printed as "A Green Tiger Press Record" GTP 001, mono. The reverse side again features the song but sung by The Bearcats.

TRACK EVENTS will no doubt cover the welcome reissue of the WHITE CHRISTMAS LP. I must say an excellent job as regards transcription has been done by the engineers on this album. And the same remarks apply to the HAVIN' FUN album by Bing and Louis Armstrong, briefly mentioned in the Christmas BING (page 42). The quality of these 1949-50 radio items is better than any I've heard on other independent issues. I gather the cover of this album may be reproduced somewhere in BING. All good wishes!

Editor: Plenty of interest from Leslie, as always. I must confess that I'm with him, too, in his reaction to the criticism of THE MOON GOT IN MY EYES; when I read the "stodgy, funereal" view I was almost as surprised as when a prominent Crosbyite declared he couldn't stand Bing's TEMPTATION ! Actually, my opinion of THE MOON GOT IN MY EYES has always been what an EXCELLENT arrangement it is - an arrangement that fully complements the 'dramatic' lyric:

"Out of the darkness you suddenly appeared,
You smiled and I was taken by surprise..."

Regarding an alternative theme tune: BLUE OF THE NIGHT is, obviously, so linked with Bing that speculation as to an alternate song is idle. But, having said that, while it is a lovely tune - so easy to pick up and sing - and the lyric is a delightful love song, it has little relevance, I feel, as a theme tune. A song which had something, no matter how little, to do with Bing's activities, such as PLEASE, lend a little ear....is purely idle speculation! And an interesting, if somewhat futile, talking point.

PLEASE NOTE: On the previous page, second para from bottom, the word virtually missing is "MAILED", e.g. "Mr. Justice Francis X Smith mailed me a 45rpm record...."

ONE OFTEN ACQUIRES A CHERISH CROSBY RECORD IN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, wrote LESLIE GAYLOR - I once retrieved a 78rpm from a stranger's dustbin; I was stopped in the street by an old lady who said she believed I was a Bing collector (not a nearby neighbour); next day, in response to her invitation, I called at her address and she gave me three mint-condition Columbias of the early Crosby. Passing Wimbledon and Merton in a train one day, I noticed a Decca warehouse; I took a chance and wrote and sure enough they had DRIFTING & DREAMING and HOW THE WEST WAS WON there and allowed me to buy them when EVERYWHERE else said they couldn't be got....I always made for the record shops and the junkshops in every town I visited over a period of more than 30 years, seldom failing to pick up a jewel of a record..on Saturdays I would trudge miles, often in the rain, thro' the back streets of London on the same relentless search....

And my story is a common one! Hundreds, if not thousands, have done similar ...scouring the flea-market, the rag-markets, jumble sales....nearly-new shops, Oxfam shops....I know of collectors who spent their HONEYMOON (with the happy co-operation of their wives) searching for records...searching thro' EXCHANGE & MART and other trade magazines for Bing record advertisements...

Min! you, I don't want to give the impression that I begged, borrowed or stole my collection! In the vast majority of cases I went into the shops and purchased my records in the normal way - tho' always with a thrill of anticipation, and a new pride in possession. There were just little, but delightful, bonuses on the side.

As Leslie surmises, there must be scores of members with great stories to tell of unexpected record acquisitions - you have only to refer back to page 48 of the Christmas issue and read again of Stan Hobbs's experience in Morden!

We'd be glad to have your stories of those lucky days ! And use them here of course.

THE AMERICANS

The above is the title of a book by ALISTAIR COOKE, celebrated for his long-running series of highly sophisticated radio talks on "his favourite country" - LETTER FROM AMERICA. This book covered 50 of such talks dealing with celebrated Americans - among whom was Bing. The story is not really vintage, nor is it new. Let's say it is slightly belated, for it was given on December 23rd, 1977 and we feel many will not have heard the talk, or seen the book. It is a BERKELEY BOOK to whom our grateful acknowledgements, and to Mr. Cooke. After Groucho Marx, came this:

 The other great man was a world apart from Groucho - in geography, upbringing, temperament, and talent. I'm talking about Harry Lillis Crosby, who, for reasons as obscure and debatable as the origins of the word 'jazz', was known from boyhood on as Bing. Some years ago a friend of mine, a publisher, thought of persuading Bing to sit down in several sessions with a tape-recorder and put out a book of reminiscences. My friend was very steamed up about this project and came to me one day and said he got the main thing, he'd got the title. He narrowed his eyes and said very slowly: "My Friends Call me Bing." "Four words too many," I said. And truly, I don't suppose there are more than half-a-dozen people in the world who could be instantly recognisable by a single word.

It's been just over 50 years since we were first exposed to the Rhythm Boys and their lead tenor, who provided the first happy breakaway from the ladylike sopranos and resonant baritones, of the London and New York stages, who were singing Youmans, Gershwin, and Rodgers as if they were still commuting between Heidelberg and Ruritania. Then the Rhythm Boys' tenor, never identified on the record label, broke loose on his own, and the word ran thro' the English underground that a genuine jazz singer - and a white man! - had appeared in the unlikelyst place: breezing along on the ocean of Paul Whiteman's lush "symphonic" sound. For about six precious months, as I recall from the fall of 1927 through the spring of 1928, Whiteman of all people, permitted a small jazz group - Bix Beiderbecke, Frank Trumbauer, Eddie Lang, and Crosby - to be given its head. And on the long spring nights, the punts drifting along the Cambridge Dock gave out with the easy vagabond phrases of Bing and the lovely codas of Bill Challis's orchestrations.

For several years after that, the underground went into mourning for the apostasy of Bing Crosby, who turned into a gargling crooner. We abandoned him as a traitor, until during the War years and afterwards he relaxed again into the unbuttoned troubadour, the mellower jazz singer known from El Paso to El Alamein as The Groaner, Der Bingle, and always Bing. For thirty years or so, there appeared a

parade of male singers, from Russ Columbo, through Como and Sinatra and beyond, who could never have found their own style if Crosby had not existed.

By then Bing had done everything he wanted to do in music and movies, and, having wisely appreciated the approach of the gentleman with the scythe, he countered him by developing other talents and went off to fire three-irons in Scotland and repeating rifles in Africa. Never a man to push himself, at twilight or any other time, he crooned only to himself. Then, fifty years after his first record, he cut a final album. Well into his seventies, he was the same Bing, because he had the great good sense to know the right keys, the navigable modulations, where to go and where not to go, unlike some other star-studded egos who like to fancy that the rules of mortality have been suspended for them alone.

I first ran into him on the set of one of the Hope-Crosby 'Road' movies, and I think I picked up a false impression of him right away. Because he was saucy, mischievous, almost gabby when he was working, especially with Hope. They ad-libbed so much and broke down in chuckles so often that at one point turned to a writer who was sitting with the director and said: "If you hear any of your own lines, shout Bingo!" Of course, Bing was witty in a droll, tired way (nobody else would have described his face, with its flapping ears, as looking 'like a taxicab with both doors open'), but the movie image of Bing was a very high-pressure version of the man off the set. Once the lights dimmed and the director said, "It's a take", Bing visibly drooped into a character so shambling and low key that I got the impression he'd had a sleepless night and would soon be off for a nap. People used to ask me, "What was Bing like playing golf? I'll bet he was uproarious, right" In fact, he was relaxed to the point of boredom, good natured boredom. It's true he always looked you in the eye, but he did it with the gray, tired eyes of a man who had seen everything - a lot of fun but also a lot of grief - and was never going to be surprised by anything said or done.

From his early success days with the Rhythm Boys and on into his movie career, there'd been all sorts of problems in and around his family: sickness, death, the bottle, truancy, spats and sulks with his sons. Until he came in to port at last, after some stormy seas, with his second wife and his new family. It is possible that he talked about these things to very close friends, but even his butler couldn't recall any. To everyone except some missing confidant, he put up the quiet defense of offhand, easy going small talk.

I can't think of another man of anything like his fame who was so unrattled by it and so genuinely modest. The accursed foible of showbusiness people is prima-donnaism: the massive ego, the implication that the whole world is revolving around them and their new picture, their new plans - which they pretend to find delightful but embarrassing. Not Bing. He was in this more mature than any actor or actress, author, or musician, statesman or politician I have known in coming to sensible terms with a great fame. His mail must have been staggering, with its appeals for

favors and money from every charity and every crackpot in the world. He never mentioned it. He was polite to every nice fan, and every child, and every moron who hailed him. All his later concerts and pro-amateur golf tournaments passed on the receipts to a raft of favorite charities.

When he died, there was a spate of film clips and replayed old interviews and the like. The most revealing of these was one done shortly before he died by the news interviewer Barbara Walters, who does have a knack for asking the childlike questions we'd all like to ask but don't dare. She asked him to sum himself up, and he allowed that he had an easy temperament, a way with a song, a fair vocabulary, on the whole a contented life. And she said: "Are you telling us that's all there is - a nice, agreeable shell of a man?" Bing appeared not to be floored. After the slightest pause for deep reflection, he said: "Sure, that's about it. I have no deep thoughts, no profound philosophy. That's right. I guess that's what I am."

It was so startling, so honest, and probably so true, that it explained why he'd been able, through hard times, to stay on an even keel. Perhaps he was one of those people who, though not at all selfish, are deeply self-centred: what they call "a very private person". Because he could not identify deeply with other people's troubles, he was able to appear, and to be, everybody's easy-going buddy, and forget death and disaster in a recording date or a round of golf. He was the least exhibitionist celebrity I have ever known. And because death is so dramatic, so showy, some of us cannot believe he won't show up in the locker room tomorrow and say: "Well, skipper, how's tricks?"

Editor: One has to consider that talks on the radio strive for the bon mot, the rounded, dramatic, phrases and while there is a lot of interest to ponder on in this chat, there is also much to question. I've never heard Bing, for instance, described as a tenor, much less a lead tenor, before. Granted, he sang in a higher tone with the Rhythm Boys, no doubt to complement their style and aiming at homogeneity of sound with them. But even then, his warm, vibrant, timbre was always noticeable. Indeed, it was often the clue that Bing was indeed a Rhythm Boy! And its tone was never 'tenor'.

Furthermore, Mr. Cooke suggests that between 1928 and the 2nd World War years nothing happened - except that Bing became a "gargling crooner". That, I respectfully submit, takes sophistication into the realms of puerility.

And the interview with Barbara Walters is correctly quoted, but I cannot help wondering if Bing, subject of so many thousands of interviews, didn't sometimes adopt a tongue-in-the-cheek stance to his questioners. We have a tape of this interview, and very interesting it is, too. But, Bing says he has no profound thoughts; yet in this same interview he expressed some very profound and deep thoughts on love and marriage, living together before marriage &c. Indeed, when Barbara seemed astonished and said "But would you disown your own DAUGHTER for doing that...?" Bing replied: "Yes, I would." We've heard, and have, other interviews where Bing laid down very firm views, using a brilliant vocabulary, on vandalism, crime and punishment, marrying too young and so on - and declared that you needed loving, caring, families - with them, you had a good nation.

THE KING OF JAZZ STANDS DOWN 28/9/35 FOR HIS SUBJECTS!

10.15 The Bing Crosby Show

BING CROSBY
travels through London and invites
you to meet

SHERLEY BASSBY

TERRY THOMAS

DAVE KING

MIRIAM KARLIN

MARION RYAN

SHAUN GLENVILLE

Pat Connors

Todd Travers-Taylor

Nikolai Rog

AND

BOB HOPE

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GENERAL DIRECTION

NORMAN LUGOFF

CHOREOGRAPHER LENORE MAYNE

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BUT WALKER

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER BOB WYNN

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

EDDIE SUTHERLAND

PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR

LLOYD WILLIAMS

DIRECTOR PETER CROFT

Associated Radiofusion
Network Presentation

Paul Whiteman off Radio Commercial Programme :. Crosby and Dorsey in

FATE performs unbelievable
pranks.

Bing Crosby and Jimmy
Dorsey's Orchestra have been
signed up to replace Paul White-
man and his Band on the present
Kraft radio commercial (occur-
ring Thursday, 10 p.m., on
WEAF)!

The two Whiteman protégés will
take over the programme on
December 5, after Whiteman con-
cludes his contract on November
25. The new Crosby-Dorsey pro-
gramme will originate from Cali-
fornia.

The Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra
concluded at Glen Island on Sep-
tember 21 and then began a cross-
country series of one-nighters,
which will bring the band to Cali-
fornia in time for the opening
broadcast. From now on, the Dor-
sey Band will be announced as
Jimmy Dorsey's Orchestra, as I
have already signified.

OVER ON THE MONEY ONE

NEW YORK
NEWS

by

Warren Scholl

Bing sings

... AND SINGS ... AND SINGS ... AND SINGS

CREDITS WHERE DUE

Throwing some light on what is a neglected aspect of the Crosby career, dealing with the, well, we nearly said "the unsung heroes" but paradoxically, as you will see, the reverse applied!



It now seems to be generally accepted that the 1930's were indeed a golden age of popular music and song, with a little leeway possibly to take in the late 20's and the early 40's. True for advertising and pressuring purposes those concerned with the current scene project it as the greatest ever, and we are liable to be assured that The Swinging Sixties was THE time, or the exciting 50's. But no one should really be deceived. The 30's were THE golden years.

Several reasons accounted for it; the sudden proliferation of brilliant musical films, the enormous popularity of radio, well over its 'teething troubles', one might say and assuredly, the enormous growth in popularity of the gramophone record. There was an almost insatiable demand for songs and more songs. The writers were not slow to respond.

It is by no means suggested that no good songs are written today. That would be bias to absurdity; but they do not appear with the astonishing rapidity with which they appeared in the years under discussion here. One has only to consider the wealth of standards - songs regularly heard today and still popular - that emerged in the 1930's to appreciate the validity of the claim. Jolson, Keeler, Dick Powell, the fabulous Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Eddie Cantor and numerous other great artists also emerged. And among them, leading them we obviously proclaim, was a certain Bing Crosby!

Right at the beginning, say up until about 1930, it was fashionable to rail against the nasal whining of 'crooners' pouring out their trite "moon and June" songs - compositions with little or no substance and certainly no claim to lyric merit. Like most fashions, however, that had a certain spurious quality - it was uttered without too much thought - or listening. True, triteness and nasality had some substance in some songs, some artists, but as the demand for songs grew a lot of writers/composers rose splendidly to the occasion. The names of Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin and half a dozen others became household names, but so many who played a tremendous part went virtually unnoticed.

(Cont. over...)



Across the page are reproductions of two Crosby career milestones - the fairly low-key announcement from America in a British musical paper of 1935 that Bing Crosby was, with Jimmy Dorsey, to take over the Kraft Music Hall radio programme. Short-lived in the case of Jimmy, but for Bing it was to prove a long-term job! It turned into an epic decade-long series which became legendary on account of the scores of celebrity guests that seemed to queue up to be in it - and naturally, the tremendous musical contributions from Bing. The other item, 26 years later, details Bing's first (1961) British TV show, mentioned in Les Gaylor's columns.

Indeed, the publishers usually got more prominence than the writers. You would see on the record label this:

A FADED SUMMER LOVE (Baxter)
(Francis Day, and Hunter)...in larger print!

and this song, taken at random has a lyric thus - we could have taken TOO LATE, I APOLOGISE, JUST ONE MORE CHANCE or any one of scores so this is more or less at random:

Leaves come tumbling down, round my head -
Some of them are brown, some are red.
Beautiful to see - but reminding me
Of a faded summer love.

Swaying high above in the trees,
They were so in love with the breeze.
Now the autumn wind brings to them the end -
Of a faded summer love.

I'm like the poor leaves that swayed with the breeze
I thought that life was sweet -
You are the sweet breeze that tried hard to please -
Then swept me off my feet.

Summer morning dew turns to frost...
Leaves that once were new pay the cost,
Beautiful to see - but reminding me
Of a faded summer love.

(with acknowledgements)

Now, with no literal or poetic expertise that seems to me to be a quite exquisite lyric. The writer conjured up the autumnal picture, as he says - beautiful to see, but heralding as autumn always must, the decay of the lovely summer leaves and blooms that preceded it. Bing's interpretation gave it even greater impact.

If record labels were scanty regarding composers, so are most discographies for they do not normally make mention of them. Understandably possibly, a line has to be drawn somewhere in what may be included - master nos., takes, accompaniments, dates, labels &c.

There is, happily, one brilliant exception and that is in KEN BARNES'S creditable though speedily written book, THE CROSBY YEARS for it includes the composers even though much of the other information mentioned in the previous paragraph is omitted. But the inclusion of composer credits is a very useful attribute indeed. Without it, one can only research these people by the tedious method of studying record labels, or certain film books.

Bing remarked to Alan Dell in his last broadcast "I got songs from all over!" He certainly did. Very early on but relatively unknown composers/writers played a very valid part in Bing's meteoric rise, conceding that his first big milestone was written by his Rhythm Boy colleague, Harry Barris, with I SURRENDER, DEAR. Bing himself is named half-a-dozen times as collaborating writer in those early days. Then there were names like Meskill, Rose; Kahn, Malneck, Arnheim, Tobias, Fiorito, Brown/Henderson, Weeks, Lewis/Young/Akst....all helping to lay the foundations of the Crosby legend.

Within a few years, another aspect developed. This was the contracting, or commissioning is the better word, songwriting teams for individual Crosby films.

Thus we began to see the names of great 'teams' of Coslow and Johnston, Robin and Rainger, Gordon and Revel, Rodgers and Hart providing the great songs for MISSISSIPPI. The next problem is who wrote the music and who wrote the words?

I know a chap, quite well known in the musical profession, who gets most steamed up over STARDUST. This is because almost without exception it is referred to as "Hoagy Carmichael's STARDUST". He maintains that the lovely lyric provided by Michael Parrish contributed at least 50 per cent to the song's enduring popularity! He has a point.

Bing's wide-ranging repertoire had to include such composers as Victor Herbert and Stephen Foster; it came to include Grieg, Debussy and Brahms! But here we are concerned mainly with those who sat down and provided fine songs for Bing when the foundations were being laid. Irving Berlin figures largely, too, because he not only wrote some of the greatest, enduring, standards but also was commissioned for certain Bing films.

Certainly a special mention has to be made of Johnny Burke, to whom Bing referred in CALL ME LUCKY in most affectionate terms. His contribution - and he was the lyric man - is almost impossible of measurement. Johnny was very likely to dash off a song on hearing Bing pass a remark, e.g. ONLY FOREVER, I'VE GOT A POCKETFUL OF DREAMS, MY HEART IS TAKING LESSONS among others.

It is a matter of some pride, perhaps, that Bing showed a great willingness to sing and record the fine songs of famous British bandleader, Ray Noble. Ray's songs included THE TOUCH OF YOUR LIPS, THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU, GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART, I FOUND YOU and others.

Perhaps there is enough here to prove our submission that the composers and writers have not had - never do have! - their share of credit! We have only scratched the surface here, too, especially when you bear in mind such notables as the great Johnny Mercer, Harold Arlen. The invaluable Jimmy Van Heusen, the Gershwins and many, others. And so many interesting things to look up - who, for example, wrote MY ISLE OF GOLDEN DREAMS, said by Bing to be his best recording? Well, it was by two gentlemen by the names of BLAUFUSS and CAHN!

If Bing was well served, especially in those early years, by songwriters, it was a two-way bargain. The writers must have been delighted that Bing not only sang their compositions so delightfully, he virtually ensured their success as 'hits'. That would be financially as well as aesthetically rewarding.

Over the page we have compiled a modest list of some of these fine teams and their solid contributions to the Crosby career and legend. Credits where due....



COSLOW & JOHNSTON:

Just one more chance
 Moonstruck
 Learn to croon
 Down the old Ox Road
 I guess it had to be that way
 Thanks
 The Day you came along
 Black Moonlight.

GORDON & REVEL:

Its within your power.
 Did you ever see a dream walking?
 Love thy neighbour
 Once in a blue moon
 Goodnight, lovely little lady
 May I?
 She reminds me of you
 I'm hummin', I'm whistlin'..
 Straight from the shoulder
 From the top of your head
 I wish I were Aladdin
 Takes two to make a bargain
 Two for tonight
 Never in a million years.

ROBIN & RAINGER:

Please
 Here lies love
 Love in Bloom
 With every breath I take
 June in January
 Blue Hawaii
 In a little Hula Heaven
 Sweet is the word for you
 What is love?
 Silver on the sage
 You're a sweet little headache
 I have eyes
 The funny old hills
 Joobalai.

BURKE & JOHNSTON:

So do I
 Pennies from Heaven
 Let's call a heart a heart
 One, two, button your shoe
 Its the natural thing to do
 All you want to do is dance
 The moon got in my eyes
 Between a kiss and a sigh.

NOTE: All the composer teams seem-
 to collaborate with other writers
 on occasion, especially in the
 case of Johnny Burke, but these
 may be considered their major
 collaborations.

BURKE & MONACO:

My heart is taking lessons
 This is my night to dream
 On the sentimental side
 I've got a pocketful of dreams
 Don't let that moon get away
 Laugh and call it love
 East side of Heaven
 Hang your heart on a hickory limb
 That sly old gentleman
 Sing a song of sunbeams
 Still the bluebird sings
 Go fly a kite.
 A man and his dream
 An apple for the teacher
 Too romantic
 Sweet potato piper
 Meet the sun half-way
 April played the fiddle
 I haven't time to be a millionaire
 The pessimistic character
 When the moon comes over Madison Sq.
 Only forever
 Rhythm on the river
 That's for me.

VAN HEUSEN & BURKE:

Its always you
 You're dangerous
 You lucky people
 Birds of a feather
 Let's all meet at my house
 Humpty dumpty heart
 Got the moon in my pocket
 Just plain lonesome
 The road to Morocco
 Ain't got a dime to my name
 Moonlight becomes you
 Constantly
 If you please
 It could happen to you
 Swinging on a star
 The day after for ever
 Going my way
 Like someone in love.
 Its anybody's spring
 Welcome to my dreams
 Sleighride in July
 A friend of yours
 Would you
 Put it there, pal
 Why do I like You?
 Early American
 Aren't you glad you're you?
 Yah-tah-ta-tah
 That little dream got nowhere
 Personality
 Just my luck
 Myheart goes crazy (Cont. over

VAN HEUSEN & BURKE (Cont)

So would I
As long as I'm dreaming
Smile right back at the sun
Country style
My heart is a hobo
But beautiful
Experience
Apalachicola, FLA
You don't have to know the
language
Once and for always
Imagination
Busy doing nothin'
If you stub your toe on the moon
Sure thing
You're in love with someone
Sunshine cake

Some place on anywhere road
The horse told me
Life is so peculiar
Top o' the morning
High on the list
Accidents will happen
Milady.
And you'll be home
Once more the blue and white
Wouldn't it be funny
I've got to fall in love
That Christmas feeling
The moon came up with a great idea
To see you is to love you
The Road to Bali
Chicago Style
Hoots mon

and, for goodness sake! many more.
JOHNNY BURKE's ability to write lyrics
is truly mind-boggling.

"A likeable trouper named Bing,
Had a voice witha most unique ring.
He would act with such zest -
And play golf with the best,
But my!..how that fellow could sing!

A Christmas card I enjoyed and got a smile from on a dark,
December morning.... from DON BOSTOCK (Virginia Water, Surrey)

AND AN INTERESTING POSTSCRIPT FROM LES GAYLOR, ALWAYS AT THE
READY TO FURTHER THE CROSBY CAUSE! HE WRITES:

A lady I have been in contact with on numerous occasions is Sheila Tracy, well known broadcaster and, as a matter of interest, a former member of Ivy Benson's famous all-girl band in the 1950's. Sheila is also a keen golfer and has used Bing's recording of STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE many times on her record programme. Quite inconsequentially I mentioned to her one day that there was another golfing song which nobody seemed to play. She was very surprised and immediately checked with the BBC Library. They had a card indicating where the Philips 78 could be located. The snag was - the record wasn't in its place and the Librarian could only say it must be "lost". The song, of course, is TOMORROW'S MY LUCKY DAY. As Sheila had indicated she was anxious to play the record on her programme I came to the rescue by putting it onto cassette; Sheila in turn got a BBC engineer to transfer it to reel-tape of their high quality for broadcasting. And to my delight, I heard it go out over the air.

One odd thing: I also, as a precaution, put TOMORROW'S MY LUCKY DAY on either side of a reel-to-reel tape but Sheila returned it, saying the engineers couldn't play it on their equipment. I'm still wondering why? Once upon a time the BBC used at least 15 ins. per second for their tape speed for broadcasting quality but now I was given to understand that tape quality had so improved that they could use 7½ips.

A PLATE of scones . . . bread and butter (thinly sliced) . . .
 a dish of raspberry jam. It is teatime in Surrey.
 And the gentleman pouring out so stylishly is Bing Crosby.
 For 37-year-old Crosby, over here to begin a new "Road"
 film, the 4 p.m. call at a cottage cafe in Chertsey was a very
 English part of a very English country-life day. He had spent
 it looking for a house.

"It must be near a golf course," he told me, dealing
 with the most important requirements first. "Three bedrooms,
 reasonable plumbing, a bit of a garden—I'll pay around £200
 a week for that."

Lamour after all

Last night he phoned a progress report to his 27-year-old
 wife Kathy (expecting a baby in October) who arrives next
 week with Henry, three, and Mary, 18 months.

Also due soon—Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour. Yes,
 Miss Lamour, who only last week turned down her part be-
 cause it was too small.

"The part has been pumped up a little and she has
 accepted," Mr. Crosby told me.

Meanwhile, he plays the English country gentleman.
 "Gee, this is living," he said as he sipped his tea.

But his illusions — and his ego — were destroyed by the
 waitress. "You must be an American gentleman," she said.

Silver Threads Among the Gold

Darling, I am growing old,
 Silver threads among the gold,
 Shine upon my brow today;
 Life is fading fast away:
 But my darling, you will be, will be
 Always young and fair to me.
 Yes, my darling you will be
 Always young and fair to me.

Chorus.

Darling, I am growing old,
 Silver threads among the gold,
 Shine upon my brow today,
 Life is fading fast away.

When your hair is silver white,
 And your cheeks no longer bright,
 With the roses of the May;
 I will kiss your lips and say—
 Oh! my darling, mine alone, alone,
 You have never older grown,
 Yes! my darling, mine alone,
 You have never older grown!

Love can never more grow old,
 Looks may lose their brown and gold,
 Cheeks may fade and hollow grow,
 But the hearts that love will know,
 Never, never winter's frost and chill;
 Summer warmth is in them still.
 Never winter's frost and chill,
 Summer warmth is in them still.

Rose of Tralee

The pale moon was rising above the
 green mountain,
 The sun was declining beneath the
 blue sea,
 When I stowed with my love to the
 pure crystal fountain,
 That stands in the beautiful vale of
 Tralee.

She was lovely and fair as the rose of
 the summer,
 Yet 'twas not her beauty alone that
 won me,
 Oh, not 'twas the truth in her eyes
 ever dawning,
 That made me love Mary, the Rose
 of Tralee.

The cool shades of evening their
 mantles were spreading,
 And Mary all smiling sat list'ning
 to me,
 The moon thro' the valley, the pale
 rays were shedding,
 When I won the heart of the Rose
 of Tralee.

Though lovely and fair as the rose of
 the summer,
 Yet 'twas not her beauty alone that
 won me.
 Oh, not 'twas the truth in her eye
 ever dawning,
 That made me love Mary, the Rose
 of Tralee.

GERALD NACHMAN

Christmas Card

Someone around here was bad-mouthing Bing Crosby the other day, calling him the Barry Manilow of yesteryear. A good line, though rather un-American and unfair.

As I quickly pointed out, at least Crosby didn't write his own songs and wear ruffly silk blouses.

I must say, I miss Bing Crosby at Christmas for precisely the corny reason you would think — for that last 10 minutes of some forgettable family yuletide special, when the camera would tiptoe in for a closeup as Crosby sang our winter anthem.

I fell for it every year, especially the last one he did it. I'm not given to premonitions, but I was



unusually moved, more than I'd ever been before when he sang The Song. I must have felt he wouldn't be around for many more Christmases, white or otherwise.

This time, when the camera crept in for a close-up, Crosby looked older than he did in my mind's eye; despite his evergreen spirit and choirboy face, the wrinkles

were deeper. Bing Crosby was, unthinkable, an old man.

If Crosby could age — that flip, light-as-air entertainer who sang so serenely so easily, as if with a pipe in his mouth and a golf club in his hand — what hope was there for us?

When he died, it seemed a crummy thing to do, as it always does when someone dies whom you first knew as a kid and figured would be around at least as long as you, joking, hoofing and insulting Bob Hope.

It wasn't quite a holiday each year until Crosby sang The Song and musically declared Christmas open. It was, I admit, an unabashedly sentimental moment, but he always brought it off; and what is Christmas if not sentimental?

I never appreciated The Song until I'd reached a certain age and been through enough Christmases and heard Crosby sing it so often I'd stopped listening. The last time he did it, I realized it's not just a pretty song, or a reverie. It's a little offhand prayer.

Crosby always made it sound like a man yearning for not just a white Christmas, but for an earlier, quieter, more peaceful, younger Christmas. Nobody else (except perhaps Perry Como) can make it sound as warm without ruining it with stickiness, as I am doubtless doing now.

It's a good sturdy song, the only modern one that can co-exist with the Top Nativity 10, but it needed Crosby to put it across every year. Decade after decade, December upon December, it was his gift.

Sinatra hasn't the needed coziness to make it sound right. Frank Sinatra means many things, but tree-tops glistening and children listening to hear sleighbells in the snow is not one of them.

Nobody else could call up the memories Crosby could — "Going My Way," "The Bells of St. Mary's," "Holiday Inn," plus hundreds of radio, TV shows and 80,000 songs, duets and dance steps.

Toward the end, Crosby got to be taken for granted, because he took himself for granted. He helped take the starch out of singing. Crosby sang the way everyone else hums.

Crosby sang "White Christmas" pure, as nonchalant as he spoke, but with strong, straightforward feeling. No warbling, no gesturing, just the words, reflected in those wistful, shiny blue eyes.

He may have been a stern father and a distant man, but you can't imagine Scrooge with a voice like that. When Crosby sang "White Christmas," you forgot everything and, for two minutes, felt tenderly towards people, the original concept.

Ever since Bing Crosby died, Christmas seems not quite right, a shade less merry and bright, a favorite ornament missing from the tree.

The story above, starting on the previous page, appeared just before Christmas last in THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE — a nice, reflective look-back. It is unfortunate that the above section has not reproduced very well as it got rather creased in its Transatlantic journey. The two top paragraphs mainly suffering above read:

"It's a good sturdy song, the only modern carol that can co-exist with the Top Nativity 10, but it needed Crosby to put it across every year. Decade after decade, December upon December, it was his gift. Sinatra hasn't the needed coziness to make it sound right. Frank Sinatra means many things, but tree-tops glistening and children listening to hear sleighbells in the snow is not one of them."



TV

BING ON THE BOX

RADIO

As already intimated, we were much chagrined that no sooner had we put BING in the post than all kinds of interesting Crosby events were in the offing! BBC and ITV had long announced their parcel of 'goodies' for Christmas; but these dealt, not unnaturally, with peak-time viewing. That five Crosby films were scheduled came as a most delightful surprise. True, they were not in the peak-times already mentioned but nonetheless, it provided a real feast of watching and enjoyment. Indeed, we cannot remember another time when five Crosby films were presented virtually on successive days. For posterity, they were:

EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN	(1939)
BIRTH OF THE BLUES	(1941)
WELCOME STRANGER	(1946-7)
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN	
KING ARTHUR'S COURT	(1948)
HOLIDAY INN	(1942)

then later, Bing's "guest" appearance in:

STAR-SPANGLED RHYTHM (1942)

Comment is superfluous as we have all seen the films before; great songs, great fun - I love that piece of 'hokum' in YANKEE when the eclipse of the sun comes along just when our heroes were in the direst peril! And that "fun" song, BUSY DOIN' NOTHING is always a delight.

I wonder though for how many there was a tinge of youthful, nostalgic, heartbreak? JOAN BLONDELL! Was there ever a more beautiful, attractive, winning, good-natured, loving (better stop this) - woman? How my heart used to ache for the gorgeous Joan when I left the cinema in the 30's and 40's, lovesick for the lovely lady that was Joan Blondell! Ah me. I never stood a chance. I felt all those things when she was in a non-Crosby film - and she was in literally hundreds I believe - but seeing her, so winning, in EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN - well, I can only repeat, Ah me.... Actually, Joan carried on up until fairly recently, and even at what must have been 70 plus, was still a very attractive lady.

So, the non-Bing Yuletide many had gloomily anticipated, it turned out to be one of the best. True, there was no special repeat of a proper Christmas show but there, who's complaining at five films?

At one time, forsooth, it seemed every time I turned on the telly I seemed to hear a Bing reference; for a couple of days before HOLIDAY INN on ITV there was that Kentucky Chicken advertisement which asked Why cook? Get our fried chicken - and you can put your feet up and watch Bing Crosby. And an off-screen voice said: WHAT AGAIN! Again, the writers of that highly amusing TV show, MINDER, seem Crosby-orientated.

In one trailer, George Cole, or Arthur Daley, entrepreneur extraordinary, was anticipating the Christmas holiday to his 'minder' Denis Waterman, and remarked he "would have to spend some time with 'er indoors, listening to old Bing groaning...." In another programme, the same character remarked, on hearing some pop music: "Bing Crosby....50 years of glorious singing, my son, fitting him for that Heavenly choir in the sky...." In yet a third instalment, Daley was on the golf-course and as his partner was preparing to drive off, he remarked "That's what he was doing when he died, you know...." "Who?" demanded his partner... "Bing Crosby, of course...."

The new-video-owners got a real bounty with the basis of a good film collection in little more than a week. There were other happy side issues. I perforce had to go to town on one day, the WELCOME STRANGER day and how natural it seemed at the Christmas crowds gazing in all the TV shop windows, watching Bing doing his stuff! The country-dance calling seemed an especial attraction.

One last thought on the films: I've always thought that A CONNECTICUT YANKEE was an off-beat film for Bing. For anyone, come to that. Not everyone realised that it was a send-up - as they say these days!

And according to my own limited listening and more especially to reports received from virtually all over the country, Bing's records were well in evidence on radio, both local and nationwide networks. Well, they would be. It would be distinctly odd if they were not.

It is with deep regret that we record the passing of two of our members. RON MILLS of Feltham, Middlesex, passed away at the comparatively early age of 59. A friend said he thought the cause of death was "heart trouble and great depression on becoming redundant after 40 years." A diagnosis that is becoming increasingly common. Particularly sad in the case of Ron Mills, for he was, hitherto, a cheerful, extrovert character who had built up quite a following in his area singing around clubs and pubs. In the course of this he always emphasised his love and admiration for Bing and his songs. Indeed, Ron was recently asking in TRADING POST for sheet-music of Crosby songs so he could use them.

Then we had the news from his daughter that HARRY O'HAGAN of Aigburth, Liverpool, died in mid-February. We knew Harry only from his friendly, enthusiastic, letters, illustrating a profound love for and knowledge of Bing and his work. His daughter, MRS. MAUREEN BOWDEN added:

"My father was a lifelong fan of Bing's, and I remember him singing his songs to me when I was a child. I'm sure his membership of the Crosby Circle gave him many hours of pleasure."

Our sincere condolences to both families.



A Crooner Grows Up

BING CROSBY is something more than a crooner these days. He is praised in this article for the skill and determination with which he has turned himself into a character actor as well.

IT seems strange that I should be writing in praise of a crooner. But maybe I can keep my self-respect by saying right at the beginning that Bing Crosby is the exception that proves the rule.

There are several ways of assessing Mr. Crosby. The simplest is the flapper way.

You can take the stand with all those swooning young women (and I am afraid a modicum of young men) and attest that Mr. Crosby's voice just does things to you.

If I'm anything of a judge of character, that isn't exactly the kind of admiration Bing would welcome at this stage of his career, but at least it's wholehearted, and it's certainly a full-blooded testimony to a large part of his talent.

Then you could take a fan view and say that Crosby is a good guy, in spite of the fact that he sings sweet and low.

Crosby's Development

You could adduce as evidence his first-class golf, his racing and prize-fighting interests, his happy marriage, his all-round popularity with the nicest folks in Hollywood.

That would be true, too. But it would be somewhat irrelevant.

I prefer to take a viewpoint somewhere between the two, somewhere from which I get a clear glimpse of a man who, with an oddly steely determination, has made himself a respected actor in a community that barely tolerated him as a simple, soulful singer.

My platform in the pro-Crosby campaign is, in its simplest terms, this: Bing has done a good job.

Looking over the picture files, you get a striking slant on the Crosby development.

When he first arrived in pictures, when he was the movies' Voice of the Moment and American radio's Very Latest Darling, his portraits were all soft-eyed, sentimentally blurry and so very tender.

A Crosby portrait now shows a rather husky bloke pulling at a pipe surrounded by an amiable grin and surmounted by a pair of smiling but definitely wide-awake eyes.

It's a portrait of a man, not a visual manifestation of a voice.

Crosby began his career by studying law at a Washington university. In his spare time he played baseball and the drum in the college band.

Then somehow the law ambitions disappeared, and the next authenticated event in the Crosby odyssey was his appearance as one of an entertainment trio.

Paul Whiteman Days

A while of touring and band work brought Bing and his pals to Paul Whiteman, and gained them a singing session with the monstrous maestro's orchestra.

When Whiteman left Hollywood after making *The King of Jazz*, Bing stayed on; and gradually became a singer in great demand at the Ambassador and the Coconut Grove.

In between engagements he made some shorts and appeared briefly in several feature pictures, but never in anything like a part. One day he asked for a rise. It was refused, and Crosby set off for New York.

It was there that he became a big radio hit—so big that, only ten months later, he was back in Hollywood appearing in *The Big Broadcast* for twenty times his former salary.

Bing's Early Films

If I were asked to say what turned Crosby from being just a popular singer into a terrific sensation, I'd say it was probably his version of "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" A good, catchy emotional number, it fitted the mood of the depression period in America with perfect nicety.

Bing's rendering of it, full-blooded, pathetically defiant, somehow getting real significance out of its easy sentimentality, was a performance of real class, something to catch the heart of a nation.

At any rate, after popularizing that song, Bing reached the peak of his fame as a crooner.

On the strength of that swift success he was rushed into pictures, pictures built around his vocal prowess.

These early films, of which *Too Much Harmony* and *Going Hollywood* were typical, were simply, although in a big way, vehicles for the romanticism of the Crosby voice.

Apart from his singing of the five or six melodies each picture contained, he had only to walk through the story.

Of course it couldn't last. Not everybody likes a crooner, and even fewer people like a crooner as the centre-piece of a film.

Crosby pictures began to take on a dangerous sameness. Bing's producers, like betrayed lovers, were the last to find out that the public were getting a bit bored.

Attempts at Comedy

Bing was quite well aware of it. He had already said, "Any moment I wouldn't be surprised to see the bottom drop out of the whole thing."

The first attempts to do something about preserving Crosby for the great film public were feeble, ineffectual, tentative.

They consisted merely of injecting comedy into his pictures—with other people to carry it—and getting Bing into funny situations—but leaving him quite solemn and song-worthy in the middle of them, a Casablanca on a slapstick burning deck.

In *We're Not Dressing*, for instance, there was plenty of bright stuff, but Bing didn't get it. Gracie Allen, George Burns and Leon Errol were the lucky ones. Bing had to sing and look mournful as before.

About this time, Crosby's films began to be quite amusing. But it also began to look as though they would have been a good deal more amusing without Bing and his soulful singing to hold up the good knock-about stuff.

He ambled solemnly and sadly through *She Loves Me Not*, crooning blues and pining after Kitty Carlisle, while Marian Hopkins, Eddie Nugent and Warren Hymer thoroughly enjoyed themselves in farcical situations.

After a while Bing must have felt quite uncomfortable sitting through his own pictures. He must have felt like a wet blanket, like a young Reckhabe at a Brewers' Convention.

He determined, with a purposefulness which few people at that time suspected him of possessing, to do something about it.

To a very surprised and almost contemptuous executive, Crosby explained that he thought he might be able to act and even be a little amusing if they would let him try.

In spite of the resulting incredulity, and taking advantage of the company of a good team of supporting players, he had a shot in *Here is My Heart*.

In that picture he didn't achieve much more positive progress than a more casual, cheerful style; but he followed up the improvement handsomely in *Mississippi*, and even contrived to hold his own with W. C. Fields in one or two comic scenes.

"Two for Tonight"

Then came *Two For Tonight* and the turning point. In certain scenes in this bright picture, Bing went all out for the slapstick.

He squirted soda water at people: he tapped ankles and brought down his man as skillfully as a Keystone Cop. He stated his case in the broadest possible terms, and got away with the argument.

There have been dullish Crosby films since, but they have been no fault of Bing's. He's maintained his improvement as an actor, even in face of poor stories. He's developed quite a talent for quiet comedy, and he can

even do the frivolous romancing stuff when the occasion arises.

His recent films, *Pennies from Heaven*, *Waikiki Wedding*, *Double or Nothing*, and latest of all *Doctor Rhythm*, have been good entertainment in which Crosby has figured as an actor as much as a crooner.

You can't get the full measure of Crosby's development if you don't remember that all the time he was changing his personality, cultivating his sense of humour and lightening his style, he was still maintaining his reputation as a crooner, as the best of them all, in fact.

He's Done a Good Job

He certainly hasn't lost any of his clarity as a singer by allowing more of his real personality to appear in his films; and by showing a sense of humour and behaving like a hundred per cent male he's won over a lot of the opposition.

I'd always read that Crosby was a good guy. That he was married to no-nonsense Dixie Lee; that he was friendly with husky Richard Arden; that he can almost break seventy at golf; that he's a useful boxer; that he trains and races his own horses; that he's one of the most popular of Hollywood's sportsmen.

But I know how imaginative publicity men can be, and I wasn't inclined to believe all these stories until Bing discarded that mournful look, took some of the throbb out of his voice, began clowning with soda-water syphons, crooning through teeth that were gripping a pipe, and getting tough whenever he could find a chance.

There must have been a lot more filmgoers like me.

Nowadays, I don't miss a Crosby picture. I know it will contain a good sincere performance from a likeable personality, some good singing, for Bing doesn't croon any more if he can help it, and a nice spot of comedy.

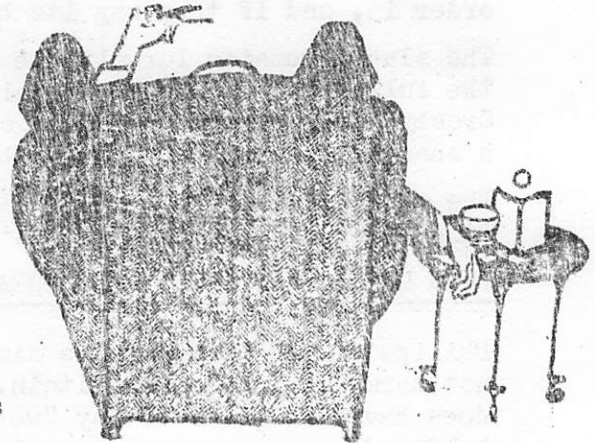
As light entertainment you couldn't wish for anything better. That's why I say: Bing Crosby's done a good job.

track

Events

RECORD NEWS

CANDIDATES
FOR YOUR
TURNTABLE
TIME.....



It is not too difficult to believe that the record companies nowadays seem to want to keep their issues secret! Sounds preposterous but how else account for the fact that what are termed middle-of-the-road issues, i.e. music that isn't aimed at the Top Ten are slipped into the shops in what seems to be a thoroughly furtive fashion?

It was well into December before we were aware that there were two "new" albums in the shops. As with the film-surge already noted, they came as a big surprise. We qualify the "new" with inverted commas because the material contained therein has been issued before. Firstly, and perhaps, most importantly, there was:

Selections from Irving Berlin's
WHITE CHRISTMAS - a ramount
Production in VistaVision sung
by BING CROSEY: DANNY KAYE: PEGGY
LEE, WITH TRUDY STEVENS and JOSEPH
J. LILLEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA &
CHORUS.

MCL 1777
MAPS 11331
(MCA)

£2.99p

The full title of the album says it all; this is the album previously issued by Brunswick, LAT 8044 and as we have noted it changing hands secondhand at £10 or £12, it is a timely reissue. We only wonder it hasn't been reissued before.

The titles are as follows; those marked * are not by Bing. Actually, things are a little complicated. On what were the commercial recordings, Bing and Danny Kaye were in the film, but Peggy Lee and Trudy Stevens take the place of Rosemary Clooney and Vera Ellen - in any case, the latter did not sing in the film although, of course, she appeared to do so. Her "voice" was supplied by Anita Ellis. See what we mean by complicated? No doubt Rosie was under contract elsewhere and couldn't sing for Decca (Brunswick) at the time:

Side 1:

1. The old man.
2. Gee I wish I was back in the Army
3. Sisters (*)
4. The best things happen while
you're dancing (*)
5. Snow
6. Blue Skies
7. Mandy

Side 2:

1. Choreography (*)
2. Count your blessing (instead
of sheep)
3. What can you do with the
-- (a) general?
4. Love, you didn't do right
by me (*)
5. White Christmas

Seems I'D RATHER SEE A MINSTREL SHOW has been omitted on this re-issue. It appeared on LAT 8044. It is to be hoped that members who badly wanted this album did in fact spot it. That's what you

have to do; no leaflets, no circulars, not a catalogue these days. Candidates for the "pop" Top Ten get their special, engineered, projection automatically. But, you have the number so order it, and if they say its been deleted, INSIST!

The sleeve remains largely the same and, by the way, we've given the full sleeve title of the album because the No. 1 traditional Crosby Christmas album is now called WHITE CHRISTMAS, also. Its a seasonal album to an extent but always good listening.

The second album offers less - unless you have started collecting Bing recordings during the last three years! It is:

TRUE LOVE: PHILIPS (PHONOGRAM) "SUCCESS" 812 660-1 £3.49p

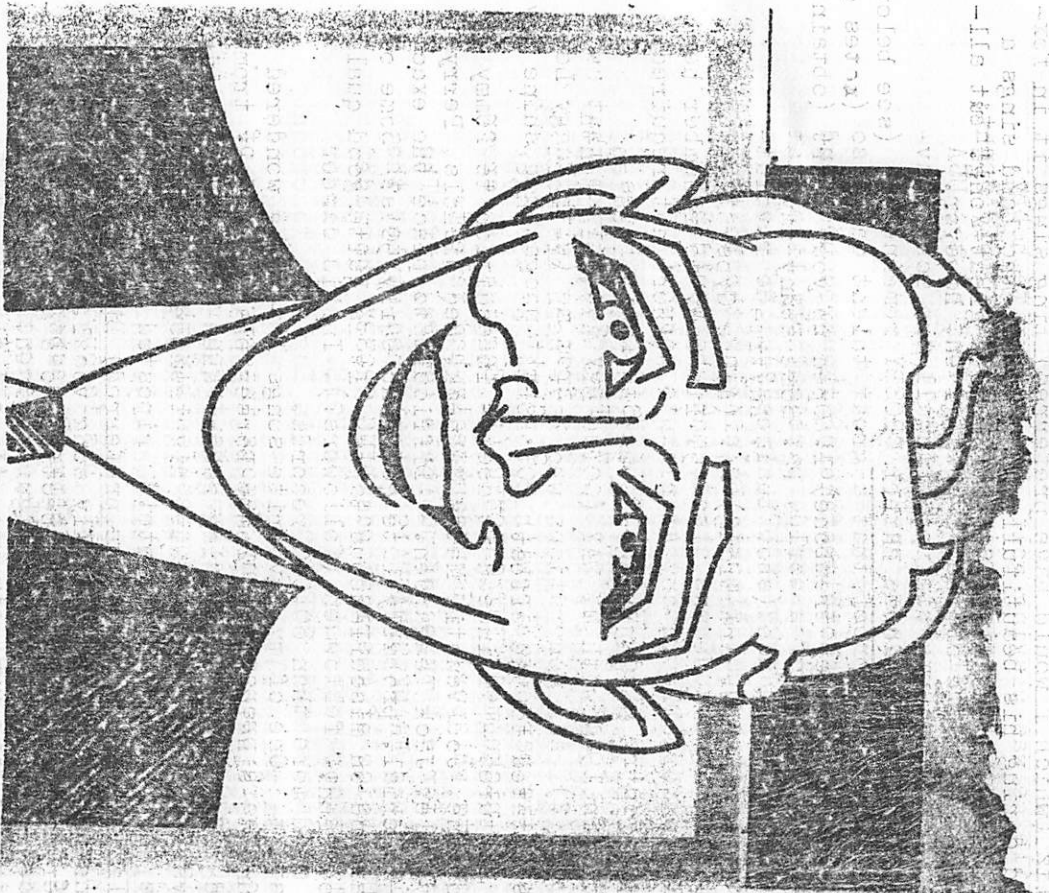
Philips's SUCCESS series is aimed at Continental issue; they are not normally issued in Britain. However, it seems that someone does have the power to say "we'll try this one in Britain" for half a dozen or so have been issued here. This is not speculation; we saw a record advertised on the sleeve of one of this SUCCESS series (of Elton John!) which we would have liked to have obtained. The shop concerned came back saying "Not Available". We wrote to Phonogram and thus learned that mainly it is a Continental project. This TRUE LOVE album is one of the exceptions brought out here; alas, it consists of fourteen of the 36 tracks issued on SONGS OF A LIFETIME. No one needs telling that these are the 1950's Buddy Cole-accompanied radio snippets to which Pete Moore and his Orchestra under the guidance of Ken Barnes added stereo orchestral accompaniment. The titles are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Yes sir, that's my baby | 1. Unchained melody |
| 2. Moonglow/Theme from Picnic | 2. Way down yonder in New Orleans |
| 3. Love is the sweetest thing | 3. You'll never know |
| 4. True Love | 4. The lady is a tramp |
| 5. Its alright with me | 5. I've got a crush on you |
| 6. You're sensational | 6. She's funny that way |
| 7. Manhattan. | 7. At sundown. |

It must be added that we took the titles down per phone and they may not be in the order shown. (We have ceased buying albums for new sleeves alone!) This sleeve is particularly colourful - basically yellow, with red and blue also and a drawn portrait of Bing that comes close to caricature; we've seen it before somewhere but cannot immediately say where. One cannot blame Philips, perhaps, for wanting to get maximum mileage out of their expenditure on this "orchestra added" material but really, only the newest of collectors are likely to be interested. At the price its a bargain. Oh, it is for the Italian market, it seems, for the sleeve notes are in that language and Vic Byne (Slough) got his hairdresser to translate as follows:

"THE MAN - 2nd May 1904 at Spokane in the State of Washington, Harry Lillis Crosby was born. He became known to history for his theatrical performances by the nickname of Bing. After arriving at university he left without hesitation, convinced by AL RINKER, pianist and composer to tour with him as a drummer around the States. Once they finished they worked together. At first CROSBY continued their partnership with Rinker and then Crosby went solo. He achieved a great amount of success as a singer and as an actor. He died in September 1977 at Madrid (cont....

Opposite is (above) a drawing of Bing that accompanied the 1938 article A CROONER GROWS UP (patronising!). Beneath is the sleeve of the HAVIN' FUN album with details of its origins. →



Bing Crosby & Louis Armstrong

Havin' Fun!

Entertaining
Live Broadcasts
(1949 - 1950)



The work of Hereford artist Peter J. Manders — whose country scenes of the country and caricatures regularly appear in our paper — is about to make its world-wide debut. Peter's caricatures of jazz giants Louis Armstrong and Bing Crosby appear on a new album being released in America by Legend records. The record, entitled "Havin' Fun", will soon be available almost anywhere in the world. It includes live broadcasts of the two stars recorded in 1949 and 1950.

Cont. from page 28

while he was playing golf, his favourite hobby. To explain his extraordinary character, this sentence said by JIMMY CARTER, President of the USA at that time sums him up: 'In all the road travelled in his luminous career CROSBY remained a gentleman, the proof that a great talent can also stay a good man notwithstanding the pressures and the flatteries of a world, particularly like that of the performance (show business?). He revolutionised the popular music by singing the best songs of all times. He was also a man who would have felt comfortable in any American's house.'

THE ARTIST - He had been a great actor; he won an Oscar in 1944 with MY WAY (GOING MY WAY), his tenth film. (?) All generations who have seen him form a fantastic partnership with BOB HOPE. As a singer he was nicknamed THE CROONER (in English, to croon means to whisper). He undoubtedly had talents enough for all types of musicals (songs). If 'The Voice' was FRANK SINATRA'S established style, the TRUE 'Voice of America' was BING CROSBY who made millions of fellowmen (followers?). In his career he sold more than 80,000 records.

The record proposes many famous interpretations of BING CROSBY, spreading throughout generations in which THE CROONER was unquestionably the teacher and loved very much."

Delightful if quaint! The gist is clear and absolutely right; we cannot account for some of the figures given, however.

CROSBYANA

Broadway BR 111

US. (see below notes on

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Diane: (with Tommy Dorsey trombone) | 1. Open up your heart (obtaining. |
| 2. Lady be good. | 2. Some sunny day. |
| 3. I got rhythm | 3. Anytime |
| 4. Blueberry Hill (with L. Armstrong) | 4. (A) The Gypsy in my soul |
| 5. Lazy bones | 5. Its easy to remember her |
| 6. It had to be you | (('Her' not required!) |
| 7. Make believe you're glad. | 6. St. Louis Blues |
| 8. Sioux City Sue | 7. They Can't take that away |
| | from me (with Peggy Lee) |
| | 8. Chattanooga Shoe shine boy. |

The sleeve is notated to the effect that it also features - as indeed it does - in addition to Tommy Dorsey on trombone, Joe Venuti, Matty Malneck, Red Nichols, Perry Botkin, Buddy Cole, Jack Teagarden. Difficult to place the exact date of this material, probably late 40's and early 50's? Some of it has been around on miscellaneous tapes. It is quite good quality - and some good fun!

DIANE for a start. One of my favourite songs I've long wondered if Bing got around to singing it. Tommy Dorsey plays a lovely trombone solo and before they start Bing asks: "When shall I come in?" and Tommy says he will nudge him with his trombone. "Do be careful, or I may come in on a very high note!" riposted Bing. Instead of the usual waltz (which I would have preferred) Bing sings it in fox-trot tempo and during his beautifully sung vocal, the band sings a comedy counter-melody. Most disrespectful to a great song! but all-round, great to hear.

LADY BE GOOD turns into a bit of a jazz riot, with Joe Venuti in great form. Bing brings a roar from the audience when he resumes singing. Somehow the arrangement has got up higher than Bing likes and his final chorus runs:

"Oh, please have piteeece
How on earth did I get up in this high key?"

matching the melody and tempo perfectly, of course.

I GOT RHYTHM is another very 'hot' performance, with Bing doing his 'scatting' ad-libbing when Peggy Lee takes a chorus. Bing and Louis, naturally, make their usual good-humoured and virtuosi contributions. LAZY BONES is also on the HAVIN' FUN album of the period mentioned elsewhere.

In the title list above there are various small errors which we put right in brackets. Altogether this is a nice, entertaining album with a wealth of talent complementary to Bing. The full backing orchestra, featuring the various soloists mentioned, is John Scott Trotters; Tommy Dorsey was obviously 'guesting'.

The actual record is slightly startling in that it is transparent BLUE vinyl.

CROSBYANA VOLUME II

Broadway BR116

US.

Sub-titled THE FABULOUS RICE TAPES, June 10, 1937 - November 18, 1938
Extracts from Kraft Music Hall radio show, also featuring Bob Burns, William Frawley, John Scott Trotter & his Orchestra with Andy Secrest.

When it gets back to 1937 one is prepared to exercise a fair degree of tolerance. No tape-recording then, all done on 16" transcription discs. Its a question then of either ignoring them, or accepting them "warts an' all" as they say. This album consists of the following:

1. Its the natural thing to do (with Bob Burns) 7.10.37
2. Sail along silvery moon (with Bob Burns & Wm. Frawley) 10.6.37
3. Smiles 7.10.37
4. Remember me? 10.7.37
5. Smarty (You know it all) 14.10.37
6. Can I forget you. 14.10.37
7. Trail of the lonesome pine 14.10.37
8. Where or When 14.10.37
9. Have you any castles, baby? 21.10.37
10. That old feeling 21.10.37

1. Sweet little you 21.10.37
2. The moon got in my eyes 21.10.37
3. Whispers in the dark 27.10.37
4. Josephine 28.10.37
5. Marie "
6. The folks who live on the hill 4.11.37
7. When you wore a tulip. 4.11.37
8. If its the last thing I do 11.11.37
9. The moon got in my eyes 11.11.37
10. I don't want to get well 11.11.37
11. There's a girl in the heart of Maryland 18.11.37

It has to be said that we've heard other LPs of this period of the MMH of much, much better quality. Whatever the source of these tracks, it can safely be said better tapes are available, somewhere. The sleeve states the two versions of MOON GOT IN MY EYES are included for interesting comparison purposes. Maybe for some. Me, I consider it wasteful. A particular appealing song is IF ITS THE LAST THING I

DO - a song we hadn't heard before. I DON'T WANT TO GET WELL is, on the other hand, a particularly silly song which must have made Bing recoil.

Sleeve notes, by one Steve Hester, say that of the "21 selections on this record only six were recorded and released commercially." We make it eight - nine if the second version of MOON GOT IN MY EYES is included. But on the whole, the notes are readable and interesting. The sleeve also says that if the demand warrants it they hope to issue another volume from THE FABULOUS RICE TAPES. Well, more imagination will have to be shewn to create that demand, I'm afraid. As noted re. two versions of MOON GOT IN MY EYES, and with FOLKS WHO LIVE ON THE HILL, REMEMBER ME, CAN I FORGET YOU, SMARTY and the other well-known numbers all closely follow the commercially issued records. How could they not for they were both, radio and record, arranged and conducted by JST. More inclusions like WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP, THAT OLD FEELING, SMILES (which surely bears an uncanny resemblance to BLUES MY NAUGHTY BABY GAVE TO ME?) make for a distinct break from commercially available tracks. I recall an album, privately produced, entitled BOUNCING WITH BING that consisted of around 30 titles, none of which had been recorded by Bing for pukka records. It remains one of the best records ever, tho' there have been more recent ones which are quite excellent - but difficult to get!

Perhaps we've sounded unduly harsh in our comments, especially as the albums do not cost a ransom. On the contrary, for such independent records they are very inexpensive. We did, however, give the incorrect price in the last issue (we took it from an American newsletter) and thought it absurdly cheap. THE PRICE OF THESE ALBUMS, EACH, IS SIX DOLLARS. Now, once more, we get involved with rates of exchange (not favourable to the £ just now, either), and it changes every day. However, the rate of dollars to the £ is between 1.4 and 1.5, i.e. approx. $1\frac{1}{2}$ dollars to the £. Without going into it too much, we reckon £11 converted into dollars at the bank will bring both albums airmail. (Surface mail is tedious, taking up to 3 months). There is, of course, an element of risking sending cash thro' the mail but it seems to be almost 100 per cent safe. One of the records, we calculate, would be £5.50 converted into dollars. International Money orders and cheques on solely British banks are expensive both to sender and recipient and it does seem, allowing for the small risk involved, actual dollars are the best bet. We haven't heard of these albums being imported by anyone and haven't seen them anywhere in shops.

And the address: STANLEY HESTER, BOX 244, MILFORD, MI. 48042, USA.

A foolscap envelope, that is 9" x 4", to contain the dollars and your order (providing you want the records!) should be ordinary-looking BUT, this is a suggestion only and we cannot accept any responsibility in the (unlikely) event of loss in the post.

We saw a single out in the form of a Christmas card/present, of TRUE LOVE and WELL, DID YOU EVAH and understand it got into the Top 20, or 30 or 50 - something like that! But, again, it received no publicity.

The HAVIN' FUN alhum, mentioned last time, and of which there is a picture of the sleeve in this issue, is conformed as the hitherto Italian issue. We have been assured, however, the quality is much better - if you can find it. And having found it, can afford it at around £7.50.

TRADING POST

The feature wherein you can advertise your wants & disposals re. records, tapes, books, &c. No charge except £1 nominal for non-Crosby items. Keep entries brief please!

David Webster, 26 Ness Rd., Fortrose, Ross-Shire, IV10 8SD has available for sale/exchange the following LPs: BING & FRIENDS, BING'S HIT PARADE BING'S TRAVELS, BING'S GREAT FILM SONGS, and BING TAKES THE ROAD all in excellent condition.

We have received the following and offer it without endorsing or disapproving; we don't know! AUCTION OF A MAJOR 78rpm COLLECTION OF BING CROSBY: Many will have heard (we haven't) of Ed Hutto, whose magnificent multi-media presentation of Bing has been seen by many. Ed. has now retired from RCA in New Jersey and returned to the Southland - without his heavy 78s. There are 773 lots of records from this collection in my next auction booklet due in a few months - perhaps May. From the first Don Clark Columbia to some great 12", thro' the Brunswicks and Deccas. They are all there! Closing date not fixed; reserve your catalog from: OLD TIME MUSIC, Box 130, Barrington, N.J. 08007, USA.

RON BOSLEY, 105 Polefield Rd., Prestwich, Manchester M25: I can supply hundreds of black/white photos of Bing. Stills from films, candid pictures of Bing at work and play, from the 30's to the 70's. Any size up to 10" x 8". Send SAE for lists. I WANT: the following film stills: (1) Bing/Martin/Teagarden in the WAIT AND THE PORTER number from BIRTH OF THE BLUES and BING/MARJORIE REYNOLDS in the HAPPY HOLIDAY number from film. Would like to buy or borrow. Will pay well in cash, or, if preferred, in stills.

MRS. RENEE CHESTER, 48 Milton Rd., Hanwell, London W7 1LF; has videos of most of Bing's films and is prepared to help anyone seeking same. Also, Renee is in America again and says that on her return she will have a number of BING CROSBY watches from the BCHS (Ken Twiss) for sale at 25 dollars each if you are interested.

T.H. KASPER, 750 N. Whites Chapel Blvd., Southlake, TX 76092, USA: Has 5 copies of THE CROSBY - GREATEST SHOW IN GOLF to trade for records. I want BING SINGS BROADWAY/LE BING/HIGH TOR/TWILIGHT ON THE TRAIL/12 SONGS OF CHRISTMAS (R-2022) and BING'S HOLLYWOOD: Holiday Inn, Swinging on a Star and Pocketful of Dreams.

EDWARD STURRUP, 113 Corporation Road, Hyannis, MA 02601, USA: Wants: Longines Collection "GOLDEN TREASURY, THE SONGS I LOVE. Please state price incl. sea mail postage to the States. If this is inconvenient can supply address of relative in London. (Seems to me Edw. will stand more chance of getting this in the States, where it was originally issued - Editor)

There is a change in the address of BING ties, viz. BAXTER'S BADGES, THE BADGE CENTRE, 13 Ropergate, Pontefract, West Yorks. The ties are in maroon or navy blue, with the Bing motif in gold. Price £3 each post paid.

Does anyone have the record of Deanna Durbin singing BEGIN THE BEGUINE? - Mr. F. Sutcliffe, 3, Corporation Crescent, Barnstaple, Devon.

PETER EDEN, 4 Cliff Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, SS0 7AJ: We specialise in getting Bing Crosby records! Broadways, Spokanes &c. - sheet music &c. &c.



JIM LOWE, 105 Renfrew Close, Strait Rd., London, E6 4PQ; Large record Collection for sale (urgent, humane reason) incl. THOSE MEMORY YEARS (6-LP Boxed); Bing's Autobiography 5-LPs., and many more 12" albums; 10" inc. Stardust, Le Bing, 7" EPs and singles, books incl. CALL ME LUCKY; plus a large number of 78s. SAE to Jim for lists. He wants any CROSBY COLLECTORS, BINGANG, BING Nos. 1, 7-10, 12, 14-16, 19-22, 24-25, 27, 29, 31.

BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD: The hardback volume which details every Bing recording, from the first in 1926 to the last in 1977 in date order, and then in alphabetical order. Invaluable for reference and endless browsing. Quite indispensable to all Bing admirers and a bargain at £3.50 post paid from: JOHN JOYCE, Bookbinders, Saltmeadows Rd., Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. We draw the attention particularly of new members to this book, not as a sales gimmick but because it is such an invaluable bargain. NOTE FOR OVERSEAS MEMBERS, the price of this volume is European £4.00; US/Canadian \$4.00 surface mail, \$6.00 airmail - all remittances in sterling and made out to: JOHN JOYCE, ICC ACCOUNT.

ICC Car-stickers, 3" dia. in blue/gold are available from BARRY THECKSTON, 13 Cunliffe Ave., Ramsbottom, Lancs - 60p each or two for £1. Just send remittance with SAE!

The last copies of PHILCO RADIO TIMES by Lionel Pairpoint, full details with prolific notes of Bing's radio programmes for that company. £2.50 post paid - and THE ABC OF BING by Colin Fugh, a painstaking analysis of varying 'takes' of Crosby records, also £2.50 post paid BOTH AVAILABLE FROM REG BRISTO. The mini-discog. remains available at £1.50 post paid (tho' superseded by BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD this mini is useful for notating and marking off rather than marking the hardback book. (Note: American members add two dollars to these prices to cover extra postage).

JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gardens, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, is always interested to hear of Crosby records/other items for sale, particularly the rarer type.

BOB JONES, 39 Gladstone St., Hebburn, Tyne & Wear NE31 2XD offers cassettes of Bing, Jolson, Dick Todd, Lanza etc. etc. C90 £2.50 each, and state any special requirements.

ARNOLD BAKER, 48 Groomsport Rd., Bangor, Co. Down, N. Ireland and JOHN UNWIN, 47 West Way, Broadstone, Dorset have both compiled varied and interesting series of Bing cassettes, C90 Both will supply lists on receipt of SAE.

Referring back to page 14 of the last issue of BING, we have learned that the statuette referred to was actually made in London! And the information forsooth came from Jean-Paul Frereault in Canada! The statuette was bought at London Airport for £1.95 and was, it appears one of a series, STARS OF HOLLYWOOD. It was manufactured by ANGELENO ARTS LTD., LONDON, N13. Can any members in that area confirm that this firm is still in existence, and does it have the statuette for sale? We would like to know, please, as would the enquirer, SHELDON O'CONNELL, 12464 Breault, Pierrefonds Que. Canada, H8Z 1H.

In answer to many members, we regret we have no news of the book Sheldon is producing - except that publication has been delayed. As we have the greatest aversion to leading members up the garden path, it will not be mentioned again until we have it in our hands.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH crossword puzzle for 28th Feb. had a clue (20 Down): "Sang SWEET AND LOW in Crosby style". The answer was CROONED! Someone should tell 'em....

IF THE "X" INDICATES YOUR SUBS ARE DUE EARLY REMITTANCE IS A BIG HELP.

(35)

DISCROSBY

MULLING OVER RECORDS - AND OTHER THINGS - OF ALL
AGES FROM THAT LEGACY...

Strange to think, is it not, that until the coming of "talkies", i.e. sound-films, we here in Britain were largely unaware of the American interpretation of our English language. And before going further we must beg the kind indulgence of our American members for we speak in the kindest sense - and as they find out when they come over, we do NOT all talk like Noel Coward, George Sanders or Terry Thomas! The coming of talkies ... my goodness that's history now, with the cinema itself largely dying out!

Anyone can read that the first sound-film was a Jolson film; without checking I can't say whether it was THE SINGING FOOL or THE JAZZ SINGER. I do know that - it seemed - that one day there were silent films, and the next it was all talkies! The development, and progress, was really phenomenal. On the same lines, I suppose, as video is developing today. And with 'talkies', of course, came the musical film. Impossible to imagine life today without THOSE. I think I can just recall the first 'talkie' I saw (apart from a Robb Wilton 'short' where he did his fireman routine: "We'll be there as soon as possible madam - keep the fire going until we get there...") was the original BROADWAY MELODY with Charles King and Anita Page. Wonderful memory. I was about 13.

However, as usual, we're digressing from the subject: the English language and how talking films affected it. Quite a lot of people were aghast. "Indignant" would write from Tunbridge Wells of how disgusted he was that the English language was being prostituted (if you please!) by American talking films. The writer would be referring to just how quickly people here were saying "Okay buddy!" or "Okay, toots"; and "get a load of this", or "Says you!" "Says me!" and a variety of other nasally-intoned phrases. Probably seven out of ten films shown here were American. Nowadays of course we're more than used to it with US-made TV shows taking up so much of our television time.

But the American accent did come as a surprise - a shock some will aver. Yet, language is continually being assaulted - remember how during World War II everyone was soon referring to the "blitz" (lightning), 'flack', (anti-aircraft fire), 'ersatz' (artificial) and other German words. We even pinched their song - LILLI MARLENE!

Certainly the English is currently under assault. Nowadays nobody seems to say "It's up to you" when a decision is required. Somehow

it has become "Its DOWN to you...." When you buy something the shop-assistant says "There you go then!" as does the man in the office when he hands you your railway-ticket... Its all rather parrot-like really. Perhaps the most monstrous of all, and the most commonly used, is "No WAY!" If anyone is asked something, instead of saying "No, I don't think so.." there is a stentorian "NO WAY!"

I wonder how many find it irritating? There is the other 'classic' - "know what I mean?" TV scripts, unscheduled interviews in the news, are all punctuated by "know-wot-I-mean?" even though the statements made permit no ambiguity! Know what I mean?

Where's all this pedantry getting us? Nowhere in particular, no doubt, but the English language is also being assaulted in a more insidious fashion. Thanks to modern 'permissive' thinking one has necessarily to hesitate over using the word "gay" for it has been given a meaning markedly different from its dictionary meaning. Bing once said he couldn't sing songs like SHINE any more; we read in the last BING that the film DIXIE is not favoured because of its 'colour' overtones. Things have certainly changed! Could Bing sing GAY LOVE today, one of his earlier recordings? He also sang KEEP IT GAY, which nowadays would be taboo, alas. No doubt there are other songs in that vein, liable to sharp misinterpretation today.

And thanks to another highlighted human deviation, songs such as MY BUDDY and I ONLY WANT A BUDDY NOT A SWEETHEART would today be either viewed with misgiving - or sniggering. Such a pity for they are lovely songs, beautifully sung by Bing.

You've probably read the article in this issue entitled A CROONER GROWS UP (blooming cheek!) in which the writer of 1938 opined that it was Bing's recording of BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME? which changed him from a very popular singer to a sensational one. A bold view considering Bing had already recorded JUST ONE MORE CHANCE, WRAP YOUR TROUBLE IN DREAMS, SNUGGLED ON YOUR SHOULDER, I FOUND A MILLION-DOLLAR BABY, PLEASE and dozens of others!

Yet there may be something in what he said: BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME is certainly a powerful, appealing, recording. Bing gave it, as he gave all songs, his full sympathetic understanding and it comes over, even today, as a pathetic cry of "What's it all about? I did all that was required - how is it I end up begging a crust?" What is known today as a 'protest song' tho' one wonders if Bing saw it as such.

Which makes it all the stranger that the song has been almost completely neglected as far as reissues are concerned. It has appeared on one or two fairly obscure albums but so far as we can trace, MCA, DECCA, EMI, CBS nor anyone else has ever reissued BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME? So many Bing hits have been reissued adinfinitum yet this remains one of the rarest and, therefore, one of the most sought after vintage Crosby recordings.

It was issued here at home in those slightly confusing early days when a Bing record could appear either on Brunswick OR (British) Columbia. BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME? came out on Brunswick 1434 and 02473 and also on Columbia DB1829, and as a matter of interest Bing recorded LINGER A LITTLE LONGER IN THE TWILIGHT and WE'RE A COUPLE OF SOLDIERS at the same session on 25th October 1932. The last-named, of course, providing one of Bing's most celebrated recording 'fluffs', a quite hilarious one, too.

It can be argued that these two other titles, LINGER and COUPLE OF SOLDIERS are just as rare and hardly ever reissued. A curiously blank period for reissued songs which the small independent companies such as Sunbeam and Biograph have only partly exploited.

Indeed, one could hope that Sunbeam, Spokane, Totem, or even our own domestic men of enterprise might issue an album or two from this era, especially now that the fear of legal repercussions on account of copyright are removed by expiry of statutory time. The appeal of an album, for instance, comprising BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME, I'LL FOLLOW YOU, TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS, YOUNG AND HEALTHY, YOU'RE GETTING TO BE A HABIT WITH ME, YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT, MY DEAR; HERE IS MY HEART, MY LOVE, STAY ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROAD, SOMEONE STOLE GABRIEL'S HORN, MOONSTRUCK, THERE'S A CABIN IN THE PINES, I GUESS IT HAD TO BE THAT WAY, would have enormous appeal - just a few, have appeared on LP - but long ago now.

They might even include DOWN THE OLD OX ROAD! Now there's a curious song, not so much for its distinctly odd title, either. That is explained in the song - its a euphemism for Lovers' Lanes everywhere, even if cynics might say it is the lane where bullshine is dispensed! What is curious about the song is its make-up; it starts off as a rhythmic foxtrot, with a very difficult to enunciate lyric, too. Then, abruptly, there is a devastating change of key and an equally devastating change of style. It becomes a ballad bordering on the sort of song popular when "Time, gentlemen, please!" is called.

It was custom-written for the 1933 film COLLEGE HUMOR by the very celebrated team of Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston. They were responsible for the other two big songs of that film, LEARN TO CROON and MOONSTRUCK. Celebrated? Well, they wrote a whole string of early Bing successes, including the immortal JUST ONE MORE CHANCE. And it should be added, DOWN THE OLD OX ROAD became more comprehensible in the film!

But if anyone asks: Who wrote BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME? how many will know the answer? The credits read GORNEY/HARBURG - and that's about all we know! Certainly this team does not appear anywhere else in the very comprehensive list of composers/writers associated with Bing. Perhaps they were what is a common event today - one-hit writers? We'd be glad of any information on these two gentlemen.

To member LES BRICE, of 40 Crown Rd., Clacton-on-Sea, Essex but formerly of Romford falls a most signal distinction! He was the only one to write and point out what must surely be the most monumental omission in recording history. To wit, Les wrote:

"..on page 37 (Christmas BING) you mentioned that we may have been puzzled by the item on the page facing page 13. Well, I was very puzzled indeed. The item states "..complete on six records". The sixth and by far the most famous single ever issued wasn't shown..."

Well, the page facing 13 in the last issue showed a leaflet advertising the songs from the film HOLIDAY INN in a 6-album 78rpm set. Our comment that you may be puzzled was because it may not have been known that 78rpm records were issued in such album-sets long before LPs were dreamed of. But, as Les Brice has startlingly pointed out 'WHITE CHRISTMAS' wasn't included! Les seemed to think it was our error. In fact, the reproduction was a faithful reproduction of a Decca leaflet issued in America around the time of release of the film. So it was Decca that omitted the biggest single 'seller' of all time! You can see 'Copyright 1942 Decca Inc.' at bottom of the leaflet.

How did this come about? Did Decca, whose recordings of course are entirely separate from the soundtrack recordings, consider that WHITE CHRISTMAS was a non-event, a little song that might be safely ignored? Hard to believe.

Bing himself has given at least two varying versions of the reaction to WHITE CHRISTMAS. On one occasion he is reputed to have removed his pipe from his mouth and remarked to Irving Berlin: "Well, this is one you won't have to worry about..." On another occasion, interviewed about the phenomenal success of the song, he said it seemed a trite little song; he seemed to have lost the "gal" in the film and he just sang WHITE CHRISTMAS to a piano.... 'a few violins were added but no-one was prepared for the way the song took off.'

Clearly Decca, Inc., weren't! And in complete honesty, we must admit that we didn't notice that WHITE CHRISTMAS had been excluded from this advertising leaflet. One can imagine that, at Decca, there were some red faces around, especially considering the fact that they are still drawing considerable revenue from their recording 43 years later. It is well known, of course, that wherever Bing went afterwards during World War II that was one song he HAD to sing and invariably it proved an emotional experience both for Bing and the audience. "It seemed," said Bing, "to become a modern HOME, SWEET, HOME".

It is possible, of course, that other members noticed this astonishing omission; but Les Brice remains the only one who bothered to write and point it out!



If WHITE CHRISTMAS was, in fact, an unexpected and quite unforeseen phenomenon, coming as it did to dominate Christmas masses from 1942 to the present, and undoubtedly for many more to come. the part Bing played in the World War II can scarcely be measured. And that would still be true if WHITE CHRISTMAS had never been written.

"Cometh the hour, cometh the man..." runs the axiom. It has often been said how "lucky" Bing was that he arrived in show business just as radio was becoming a worldwide medium of entertainment; he was "lucky" that the microphone was invented just before he arrived... he was "lucky" that so many fine songwriters were around when he emerged. "Lucky"? Well, perhaps, to a small extent - but was there ever such a man to fully complement these developments and situations? Cometh the hour, cometh Bing! From then on there luck had little to do with it

One might just as well say World War II came along to make Bing even luckier! Preposterous thought - but yet again, look how he filled the bill! Its easy to believe what has so often been said about requests for Crosby records amounting to two-thirds of all requests to the BBC. Easy to believe when you think back, or better still of course, listen again to records like HELLO MOM, LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY, I'LL BE SEEING YOU, YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE, MANDY IS TWO and so on.

Such songs, sung in that characteristic warm voice, always so inimitably interpreting telling lyrics with his usual sympathy yet never maudlin. Small wonder that though they pulled at the heart-strings on occasion, they were a tremendous link with home - and loved ones, all through those cataclysmic years in every continent of the world and certainly every theatre of War.

Naturally, the times were responsible for the emotional type of songs being written. They usually are; and if the more realistic were inclined to flinch at HELLO, MOM, it would be difficult to do that with I'LL BE SEEING YOU, or LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY.

The measured, dignified, arrangements, and Bing's immaculate delivery and "feeling", or empathy, of and for the lyrics were not likely to provoke cynicism. How could they, with millions of men and women, uprooted, living under almost unbearable stress whether at home or "overseas" and yearning for even a few minutes of normality? And that was indubitably supplied by Bing. Playing those records again, 40 or more years later, the impact is still immediate. I imagine it must be even to those too young to remember the actual times.

There were, too, those purely War-promotion songs - war-promotion admittedly almost an obscenity! - like buying Bonds for Victory, HOT TIME IN THE TOWN OF BERLIN, VICTORY POLKA, THE BOMBARDIER SONG, and others.



While no doubt they served a particular purpose, it was symptomatic of the times that it was the 'yearning' songs that one heard almost daily - sometimes several times during a day forsooth. I'LL BE SEEING YOU.....I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS (if only in my dreams...)

Eddie Dunstedter is a name to intrigue among the hundred or so accompanists at varying times on Crosby records - and perhaps he has some special niche in providing the longest name possibly ever to appear on a record label, viz: Captain Eddie Dunstedter and his West Coast Army Air Force Training Centre Orchestra. One imagines any compere would take a deep breath before announcing their appearance! This was, in fact, the outfit that accompanied Bing on his War-time record of HELLO, MOM just mentioned.

This was recorded in July, 1942 along with BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILV'RY MOON. Earlier Eddie had provided the backing to six of Bing's tracks on organ, sometimes Hammond, sometimes pipe organ., e.g. THERE'S A GOLDMINE IN THE SKY, WHAT THE ORGAN PLAYED 'O PROMISE ME', LET'S WALTZ FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE, IN THE MISSION BY THE SEA (all in November 1937), and LITTLE LADY MAKE-BELIEVE, WHEN MOTHER NATURE SINGS HER LULLABY in April 1938.

Who was Eddie? A particularly favoured friend of Bing's? or perhaps he was the 'resident' organist at Decca, utilised in Jack Kapp's policy of spreading things around? That Bing subsequently sang with Eddie's Forces' outfit in 1942 suggests the former.

Bing made many records with organ accompaniment, the first being CAN'T WE TALK IT OVER/I FOUND YOU with Helen Crawford, the wife of the celebrated Jesse Crawford, known as 'the poet of the organ' and one of the first really prominent theatre-organists, who did not himself record with Bing. Helen was the organist at the famous Paramount Theatre in New York and her recordings with Bing were in December 1931. An interesting point about these two tracks is that while Helen played the organ in New York, Bing is said to have been on the West Coast and seas, therefore, several thousand miles away! Probably one of the first, if not the first 'stunt' or convenience arrangements.

An electric organ was played by Erwin Yeo of the Paradise Island Trio (the others were Russ Magnus, vibraphone and Sam Koki, steel guitar) in their five recordings with Bing which included the record Bing reckoned was his best - at least he reckoned he "got some good tones on that," as well as the highly attractive version of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT (July 1940). And of course, there was organ accompaniment though not of the theatre or electric variety, on the numerous hymn recordings Bing made. And to save the diligent pointing it out we may as well mention that Bing also made BUT NOT FOR ME with Eddie Dunstedter and his forces' outfit!

Obviously Eddie, like so many musicians, went into the American armed forces on the outbreak of War, hence his connection with the Air Force Orchestra. But apart from his name on labels we know nothing of him.

To complete the "organ scene" we must point out that Buddy was a very able exponent of this instrument and was very apt to include it in his accompaniments to Bing. Ethel Smith, also, was a most dexterous organist (famed for her incredible version of TICO TICO) and also recorded with Mr Crosby....we refer to Buddy Cole, of course!



Like everyone else, I read Leslie Gaylor's contributions with great interest and I was particularly interested in his conversation with Bing regarding the Buddy Cole tracks, or what are now known as that. You will recall Bing astounded by telling Leslie he'd "never heard 'em..." and went on to they weren't really meant as records. They were not PRODUCED as such. I find that a most telling comment; clearly they weren't. For a start, they are too brief, usually the one chorus. It is clear, also, no arrangement was worked out - and almost certainly no rehearsal.

We know, too, that Bing sang "off-the-cuff" to Buddy's piano, and the rhythm, organ and sometimes other instruments, were all grafted on afterwards. Not the sort of material usually associated with pukka gramophone recordings - tho' that doesn't in any way mean Bing didn't sing with his characteristic style and expertise. Albums have since been made of them, of course, notably those 'engineered' By Ken Barnes and Pete Moore for A LIFETIME OF MUSIC - surely a No. 1 misnomer? NEW TRICKS, and the MFP based on it, WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT to me sound more acceptable, to be perfectly frank.

As Bing also said, these were run off purely for slipping into radio programmes in the 50's. Not for the first time, however, one must wonder what Bing would have thought of SONGS OF A LIFETIME?

I imagine I frequently give the impression I'm a "Thirties Man"! Not surprising either to those who remember those halcyon days. But its not completely true. Bing was always Bing, and the essentials of his remarkable make-up were always there, right thro' to 1977..... Indeed, there are several what I call 'modern' albums that give me a lot of pleasure. Reluctantly, as will have been noticed before, I do not include BING SINGS WHILE BREGIAN SWINGS, or EL SENOR BING - and BING 'N BASIE doesn't get me jumping up and down in excitement, either.

THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS, however, is always a delight; as, assuredly, is the HEY JUDE, HEY BING album. In fact, I'm very fond of this record both for repertoire and Bing's singing. The accompaniment too, is highly acceptable. LONELY STREET, MORE AND MORE, LIVIN' ON LOVIN', ITS ALL IN THE GAME, and especially perhaps, LITTLE GREEN APPLES. The way in which Bing sings that second verse demonstrates his 'feel' for a lyric:



"Sometimes I call her up at home,
Knowing that she's busy..."

and so on. A really fine interpretation. Listen again!

Most would agree its hardly the function of this magazine to deal with records by Bing-imitators, worthy as some of them may have been. The list is quite endless. But, perhaps there are grounds for making an exception in this case:

THE VERY BEST OF MICHAEL HOLLIDAY: MUSIC FOR PLEASURE MFP41 5646 1
Price £2.25p

It would be idle to deny that the late Michael Holliday made a really uncanny job of imitating Bing; this he did from a genuine love and admiration for Mr. C. The two became friends and Mike unashamedly made no bones about singing like Bing - against the advice of his MD who said: "Where can you get with Bing still around?" Nevertheless, Mike, whose life ended so tragically and so prematurely, made some really splendid records as this album of sixteen tracks ^{shows}. To be "another Bing Crosby" you would have had to have a long apprenticeship, a quick and ready wit, have made countless films with the greatest stars around, run a radio programme for decades - and so on. So, we'll dispense with that particular phrase. We would say, however, that Mike among all the imitators, was the only one who fooled us on one occasion! Switching on the car radio one day I heard "Bing" singing WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP. I pricked up my ears - surely Bing hadn't recorded that? And the orchestration seemed too modern for Bing at the time. At the end of the song, of course, it was named as Mike Holliday singing! Titles are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. The story of my life | 1. Starry eyed |
| 2. I'll always be in love with you | 2. My heart is an open book |
| 3. Old Cape Cod. | 3. The yellow rose of Texas |
| 4. The Runaway train. | 4. Hot diggity. |
| 5. The gal with the yaller shoes | 5. Palace of love |
| 6. Nothin' to do. | 6. In love |
| 7. Ten thousand miles | 7. Skye boat song |
| 8. Stairway of love. | 8. Rooney. |

All titles from the mid and late 50's, Norrie Paramor and Ken Jones directing the accompaniment. The handsome sleeve, with a splendid picture of Michael, has notes which refer several times to Bing and note his recorded message to the memorial concert given to honour Michael Holliday. And if we have argued that Bing never really sang "boo-boo-boo" in any song, Mike certainly does in RUNAWAY TRAIN! Still a big favourite on childrens' request programmes.

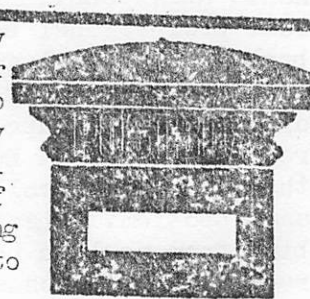
OLD CAPE COD is beautifully sung, as is THE SKYE BOAT SONG - tho' the whole album is first-class, and at the price quoted is a boon.

Our distinguished member, FRED REYNOLDS, of Birmingham, renowned as a leading member of the team that produced THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY discography, and THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD, the comprehensive film book, had the pleasure - melancholy as it turned out - of entertaining Michael in his home shortly before his tragic end. Fred has said there was absolutely no indication at all of what was so shortly to follow. It was apparent, however, that the singer was a very shy, introspective, man and every public or recording session was an ordeal to be overcome. How strange that his actual performances gave no inkling of this.

We learned for the first time that Mike Holliday was born in Liverpool. Its difficult to believe that he has been dead now for over twenty years. A great loss to the British scene, as Bing said.

BILL CHATFIELD, 37 Newton St., Olney, Bucks:

The comments from Don Woods regarding the Crosby John Scott Trotter partnership makes one wonder if we are at last trying to dig up something to talk about. When Bing sings everything in my little world comes to a stop and it is not until he has finished that I come back to reality. If anyone afterwards asked who was accompanying Bing I would say: "I don't know - I was listening to Bing!"



BING

Letters

On the autobiography set, before Bing sings MIXICALI ROSE with the Buddy Cole trio, he has this to say: 'When you come right down to it you just can't beat an honest, straightforward, ballad... I wanted to play you the original recording of this because the arrangement by John Scott Trotter to my way of thinking is the perfect example of how to properly furnish the vocalist with musical support. Never obtrusive, always in good taste.'

It's all a matter of opinion. Don seems to think the golden years were 1932-36 whereas to my way of thinking the War years was when he was at his very best. But Bing has proved beyond any doubt that he never relied on any orchestra to get him to the top. It was that voice, gone for ever, but miraculously still with us.

AL LONGWORTH, 174, Mount Pleasant, Wembley, Midd'x: Regarding the controversy which seems to have blown up over JST's backings for Bing, I would like to say that for many years I held the same views as Don Woods until I began to realise just what JST's approach was, and this was simply to use Bing's voice as the lead melody 'instrument' with the rest of the orchestra playing the associated, or complementary, parts. One can appreciate this point better when listening to any number of modern orchestral backings to singers, wherein the vocalist seems to have to fight a running battle with the orchestra. This is especially so with the all too prevalent use of what I call the 'rubber drum' banging away, even on ballads and other fine pieces.

Bing's voice had the unique ability to overcome almost any quality backing, even coming through the sometimes very poor late 20's recording limitations. It's only since JST's technique became clear to me that I began to appreciate him, and I find it sad now to read criticisms of him.

JOHN STILES, Newlands, 10 Barnhill, Pinner, Midd'x HA5 2EX:

Could you please solve a mystery for me? On Bing's 1931 recording of GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART, for part of the final chorus Bing speaks, quite huskily and says: 'I want you to know that my love will always.....you.' I think the missing word is 'brighten' but I can never be sure. Unusual for Bing's diction not to be readily apparent. It would be satisfying to iron that one out - unclear for 53 years!



Editor: I was never sure, and listened carefully a dozen times or more and I still am not sure what Bing says. I think it may be "guard" or "guide". Can anyone clear this up?

Reg Bristo,
7 Greenmeadow Close,
CWMBRAN,
Gwent, NP44 4PJ

ALAN CHADWICK, 3 Mortimer Close, Phoenix Green, Hartley Wintney, Nr. Basingstoke, Hants RG27 8EL: I have just obtained some professional equipment for playing back reel-to-reel and cassettes at variable speeds for my own use because many of my old Bing tapes are out of true as regards speed. It has crossed my mind that many other collectors may have the same problem. I have facilities for dubbing from reel to reel to reel-to-reel, reel-to-reel to cassette and vice versa; plus cassette to cassette. I would be prepared to help out anyone who has this problem, providing they cover postal expenses and cost of tapes. Anyone with problems of the speed kind is invited to get in touch and I will endeavour to help.

John R. Shaw, 351 Midway Blvd., Novato, CAL. 94947, USA: I am looking for CORALS: I LOVE YOU TRULY/WITH THE ANDREWS SISTERS VOLS I & II, DAY DREAMING - Ace of Hearts: AND THE DIXIE-LAND BANDS/HOLLYWOOD SINGS III/TRIBUTE TO COLE PORTER/AMONG MY SOUVENIRS/ICHABOD/BELOVED HYMNS. Will buy or trade.

Editor: A generous and useful offer; we know there are hundreds of tapes which are so afflicted - dubbed and redubbed incessantly, on questionable machines, early machines, in unskilful hands, kept only because there is no alternative. To be able to get them back to the right speed would be a boon.

TIM MORCHRETH, 1906 Codd Aven., Balto., MD 21222, USA: I've recently signed an interim contract with a publisher to compile a BING CROSBY DISCOGRAPHY & FILMOGRAPHY covering all 78 recordings thro' 1956, radio shows to the end of the GEC series and a complete film section. It was an extension of my WHITEMAN ERA, now incorporated into this tome. Anticipated release is late 1984. What I'm looking for is some help in the following areas:

- Song titles from the Chesterfield broadcasts.
- KMH song titles/certain dates
- Woodbury data
- Music that satisfies data
- B & W. photos (film stills/publicity shots with sponsor identification preferred).

I am arranging that a portion of my proceeds be donated to the BCHS birthplace fund. If anyone can help in the areas mentioned I will be very grateful.

Editor: Ron Bosley's advty in TRADING POST should help in the picture field. As one member has pointed out, little seems to be known about KMH before 1937, however. If you can assist Tim, make direct contact, not with us please.

THEO HARRIS, 70 Dollis Hill Aven., London, NW2 6QT: 'Star Sound' on Radio-2 Mondays 9.30pm played Bing extracts in the last session for 1983 and the first for 1984 with the announcement that Bing topped the requests for 1983. It is gratifying after hearing so much of Fred Astaire and Dick Powell in previous years - tho' I admire Astaire second to none in his sphere.

I can contradict the statement in BING (last) that no albums of Bing were issued in the UK prior to the introduction of LPs. My Brunswick catalogue of 1941 includes two Crosby albums of 78s: (1) Special album of Bing Crosby Favourites 02805-10 and (2) Cowboy songs 0293-28 (We weren't adamant on the point; we did say "as far as we know". Ed)

Do you remember the 78s for the four songs from DOUBLE OR NOTHING which were issued with centre labels depicting 'stills' from the film. Was that unique to Bing? (No, a few other artists were so honoured - certainly the Ink Spots had picture-labels on a few of their records)

Most of the sheet music for the songs by Bing in the earlier 30's depict an elegant, svelte, Bing, embracing an equally elegant lady in

a romantic posture - I have quite a batch of these songsheets. Later the publishers substituted the cheerful, homely, photographs.

Editor: Yes, the early Bing was projected as "romantic" and then changed as Theo has noted. However, more on those 78-albums:

JOHN LAWSON, 2 Curzon Ave. Wallasey, M'Side, L45 5AX: Referring to the piece in DISCROSBY (Christmas issue) concerning the non-issue of Bing albums, I purchased an album containing six 10" 78s, here in Britain in 1939. It had an attractive purple velvet binding with a photo of Bing on the cover. Some of the titles were STAR-SPANGLED BANNER/GOD BLESS AMERICA/WHEN THE BLOOM IS ON THE SAGE/DOWN BY THE OLD MILL STREAM/I CRIED FOR YOU and MY MELANCHOLY BABY: I think I paid 24/- for it at the time.

Editor: That's conclusive then - these 78 albums were issued here. The one described by John sounds like the one I picked up in a secondhand shop; there was no indication whether or not it was issued here or had been obtained from America.

THE PENNY HAS DROPPED, AS THEY SAY! AS TO WHY LITTLE IS HEARD OR KNOWN OF THE KRAFT PROGRAMMES BEFORE 1937. THE ANSWER CLEARLY IS THAT IT WAS JOHN SCOTT TROTTER WHO HAD THE FORETHOUGHT TO RECORD THESE PROGRAMMES; (and these were subsequently discovered by Eddie Rice. JST'S PREDECESSOR DIDN'T DO THIS. AND WHILE ODD SCRAPS OF BING/JIMMY DORSEY ARE ABOUT, THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE "DISCOVERED" ON THE SCALE OF THE JST COLLECTION.

The writers of MINDER (see BING ON THE BOX) were at it again the other night! Terry mentioned a fictitious pop group - Zack and the Asteroids (tho' it could have been real). Arfer looked up in disbelief: "Zack and the Adenoids? What happened to the Bings, and Perry's of yesteryear?"

It seems reasonable to assume that all those members who write so diligently to the BBC and ITV for Bing films got their return - to the benefit of all of us. Well done!

SEEMS ITV HAVE ANOTHER HALF DOZEN CROSBY FILMS LINED UP FOR EARLY SHOWING.

We are grateful to all letter-writers and regret only a fraction can be used. They are all, however, read with interest.

It should have been mentioned in TRACK EVENTS that BROADWAY (PR) Stan Hestor, have issued the Bing-Glenn Miller broadcast of Sept. 1944 on an album. Although of immense historical interest, especially to those who are Miller fans also, honesty compels us to say the quality is not good. The original had been ill-used and all versions we've heard are in the same "not good" category. But.... history!

NINIAN FAICHNEY, 20 Foundry St., Bainsford, Falkirk, FK2 7SF: Many articles delighted me in the Christmas issue, especially that by Ray Forster when he described how in the mid-30's and up to his services call-up, he used to listen to the Kraft programmes. I used to do the same thing and, like Ray, I neglected to make a note of the content of the programmes. But what does stick in my memory is the actual attempt of tuning in - on a home-made, two-valve, earphone set with 8-ft of wire stretched across the kitchen for an aerial! It was in the nature of a gamble; sometimes only crackling and atmospherics, but what delight when it came in loud and clear: This is Radio City, W2XAF Schenectady, New York... Then the welcome to Bing and details of the programme. A great thrill to hear Bing 'live' as it were. I know Frank Briggs in Hull was another who used to tune-in in the hope of getting Bing.

Editor: And now, with the miracle of transistors radios the size of a tablet of soap, the youngsters carry 'em around to get the local radio station - usually a mile or two away! With you in June.

RETURN OF THE GEC SHOWS



s pledged in the December issue, we resume the listing of the radio shows Bing did for the General Electric Company in 1953 and 1954 - now 30 years and more old. Another shattering thought! Many members will be delighted at this, especially as to try and redress the neglect there are four pages covering 12 shows. And those working away at the non-commercial discographies of Bing songs will also be particularly pleased.

In addition to giving the rather prosaic details of the various programmes, these shows do provide - for those who care to interpret the clues - a commentary on Bing's career and what was happening to it contemporaneously. To illustrate: reference to patter on the literary Bing (Programme No. 50) must have been allusion to the publication of Bing's autobiography CALL ME LUCKY. Similarly, there was chat on Programme No. 46 regarding Bing's 'French LP' - obviously LE BING and the fact that Bing had recently been working in France. The momentous event of Bing's first television show is also recorded in this way - as well as the reception accorded to it.

The "Salute to Big Brother!" (Programme No. 55) must remain a puzzle - Orwell wasn't fashionable then and in any case, no one was likely to salute his forecast of 1984!

The "guest-list" is also highly illuminating; it shows that Peggy Lee, then up-and-coming, was featured certainly as often as Rosie Clooney. Perhaps some remember Connie Russell? We don't! But it is noted that in one of her appearances on the show she sang one of Bing's very earliest recorded songs - MY KINDA LOVE.

And this list certainly shows the considerable radio opportunities and exposure son Gary was getting as a young man of around 20 years. Well might it be asked - as it was in our story recently HONOUR THY FATHER - what happened to all that promise - and opportunity?

Songs are wide-ranging, covering hits of the day, standards and on occasion a real 'slip-back', i.e. LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER in Programme 53. Many of them have turned up on the various air-shot albums independently issued this past few years. I must say I am intrigued that Bing and Rosie sang WE JUST COULDN'T SAY GOODBYE, a lovely song from the early 30's which I've never heard sung by Bing. (Programme 50).

If these programmes exist as a 'package' one wonders whether we'll ever hear a run of them via the BBC? Doubtful, I would suggest. As Bert Bishop observed in his introduction to this series, the shows contained a distinct and even revolutionary innovation. This was the near-political chats each programme between Bing and Ken Carpenter. If they came the way of the BBC the shows would no doubt be edited to omit these items.

And its not entirely irrelevant that the great days of radio were over when this GEC series was broadcast. Its difficult to escape the feeling that everyone, certainly including Bing, were looking over their respective shoulders at the new media-giant looming over radio - television. Bing himself, having conquered the record scene, the radio and film fields was bracing himself, at the age of around fifty, to meet this tremendous new challenge.

How he met this new claim on his talents must surely be an entirely separate story!